

GRACE WHITNEY HOFF

The Story of An Abundant Life

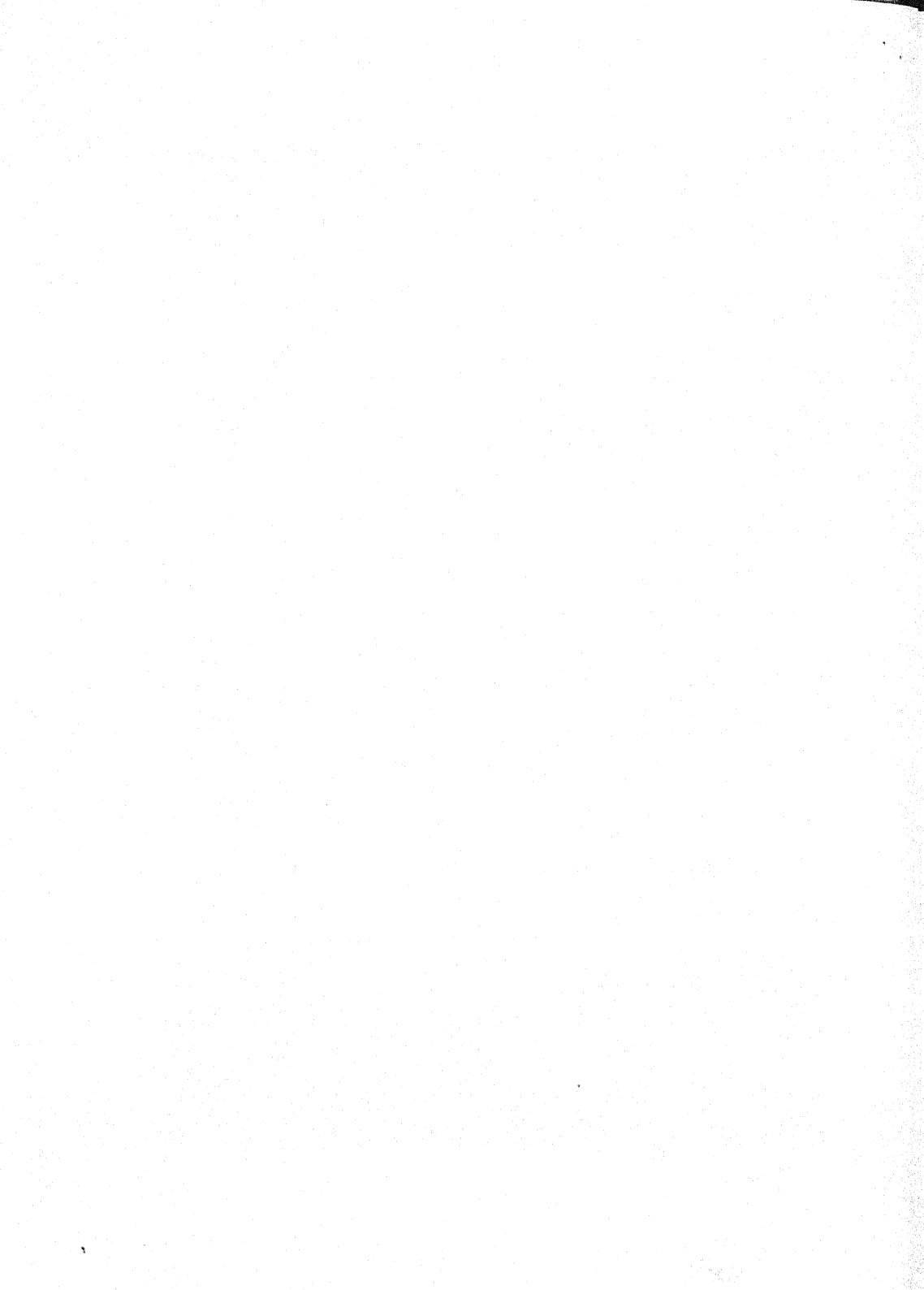
BY
CAROLYN PATCH

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Mrs. Hoff, from photograph made in Paris, 1931

*Rose silk of the gown was woven by the peasant women near
Peyrieu, who set up old hand looms specially in
order to weave this silk to present to Mrs. Hoff*



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TO
HER GRANDCHILDREN
ERNEST ALBERT LABOUCHERE
CHARLES DAVID LABOUCHERE
ALIX GRACE LABOUCHERE
ROBERT EUGENE LABOUCHERE



FOREWORD

IN PRESENTING the story of Grace Whitney Hoff, I am faced by a dilemma. Those who love Mrs. Hoff — and their number is legion — cannot look upon her dispassionately. To them no picture that I can paint will seem to do her justice. On the other hand, to those who never met Mrs. Hoff, the truth in its simplest form will seem extravagant.

Yet I have undertaken the task, strengthened by my own admiration of the woman whom I have served in two capacities. In 1906, when Mrs. Hoff was no more than a name to me, I was summoned from Los Angeles to Paris to become secretary of the British-American Young Women's Christian Association which she had organized and of which she was president. In those few years under her direction I learned more about the military function of concentrating on my task and eliminating all else than I have ever learned in any other post.

Our paths separated, but eighteen years later when they crossed again in New York, we did not meet as strangers, for her thoughts had followed me in my wanderings, as they follow anyone who has ever been her friend. She asked me to return to France as her secretary, and I accepted.

Since then the varied aspects of her goodness have been revealed to me day by day until the evidence became bewildering. If I have overstepped the mark of prudence in my praise, or extolled virtues which it is the pleasure of the age to disregard, and invited the scorn of the more anatomically minded biographers, so be it. Regardless of the fate of these pages, the good deeds which Mrs. Hoff has done will live after her and be her true biography.

C. P.



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INTRODUCTION

IT IS not many years since a distinguished teacher, called from one of our greater universities to a sister institution and given the privilege of naming his chair under this new appointment, announced himself as Professor of Biography. The warm approval which met this recognition of biography as an important subject of academic study revealed the perennial interest among people of many types in the stories of significant lives. But beneath mere interest there was disclosed a thing of greater value, the persistent craving in the hearts of many, striving to make their daily living something of worth, for that light and inspiration to be had from no source so richly as from those who have achieved 'the good life.' To such instinctive turning toward masters in the art of living the confusion of our time increasingly prompts us. As unfamiliar currents sweep about us, as lights once as dependable as the stars become uncertain, as moments of storm and stress increase, there is heartening in the contemplation of every life which moves on strongly, steadily, gladly, to sure ends, bringing strength and joy along the way. Conspicuous among such lives is that the record of which fills the pages which follow.

Doubtless because of its sheer interest, this volume will have many readers. The story of a life lived intensely on two continents through decades among the most momentous the world has known will attract a great company of those eager to be informed of the life of today and of those who bear a responsible part in it. Yet the real reason for the preparation of the book has been other than this. Because the one here portrayed has been purposeful from the first, devoted wholly to an unwavering ideal of philan-

thropic service, and consequently happy with the most abiding satisfactions the human heart can know, she would share the secret of her happiness with others. In so interpreting this life, the author has done her work with a completeness of knowledge, an understanding, a sense of proportion, and an appreciation of the deeper values altogether admirable.

In the varied and fruitful forms of service of which some account is given in these pages, certain general characteristics will be noted by the reader. For one thing, help has never been given in the easiest way. There has been no careless scattering of largesse, like that of the princes of the story-books. Attention, thought, sympathetic insight have ensured for every gift its utmost effectiveness.

But more characteristic and unusual has been the creative character, especially of the later and greater philanthropies. From a father who bore a notable part in the empire-building period of our national history there was transmitted to the daughter a capacity for large affairs and a creative imagination manifested in her undertakings on both sides of the Atlantic. In the international home for students in Paris, for example, the character and equipment of the building from foundation to roof bear the stamp of originality. There is about it a unique excellence which makes it the recognized type of what such an institution should be: while at the rest homes at Peyrieu, the charm of the buildings and their surroundings together with the friendly and healing atmosphere which pervades them mark them as something distinct. A new thing has here been set up for which there was no pattern. It is a creative spirit which dreamed these dreams and with infinite care assured their realization.

Yet the most impressive characteristic of this life of many beneficences has been its constant self-giving. Sympathy, concern, thought, personal effort, and toward

friends an unwavering loyalty and interest, have marked the life amid its steadily enlarging responsibilities. The unflinching adequacy of this outgoing of soul has been an astonishment to those who have observed it. Before demands which should prove exhausting, here is a 'fountain life' indeed. From what abundant and secret springs is the spirit fed? With simple truth the author has answered in pointing to the religious faith and devotion which are at the center of the great circumference of activity. It is with a fine sense of the deeper realities that the book closes with the words of a prayer daily uttered. As a musical composition, ranging far, rounds at the end to a chord in which is struck the keynote to which the whole has been set, so in the closing paragraph is struck the keynote of all that goes before. This unflagging ministry of helpfulness, this weight of character in action, this unbroken joy in life have their roots in religious faith. With all else that it is, this story is a convincing witness to the power of that Christian motivation of life of which we talk less than our fathers, but of which, in demanding days, we have perhaps more need than they.

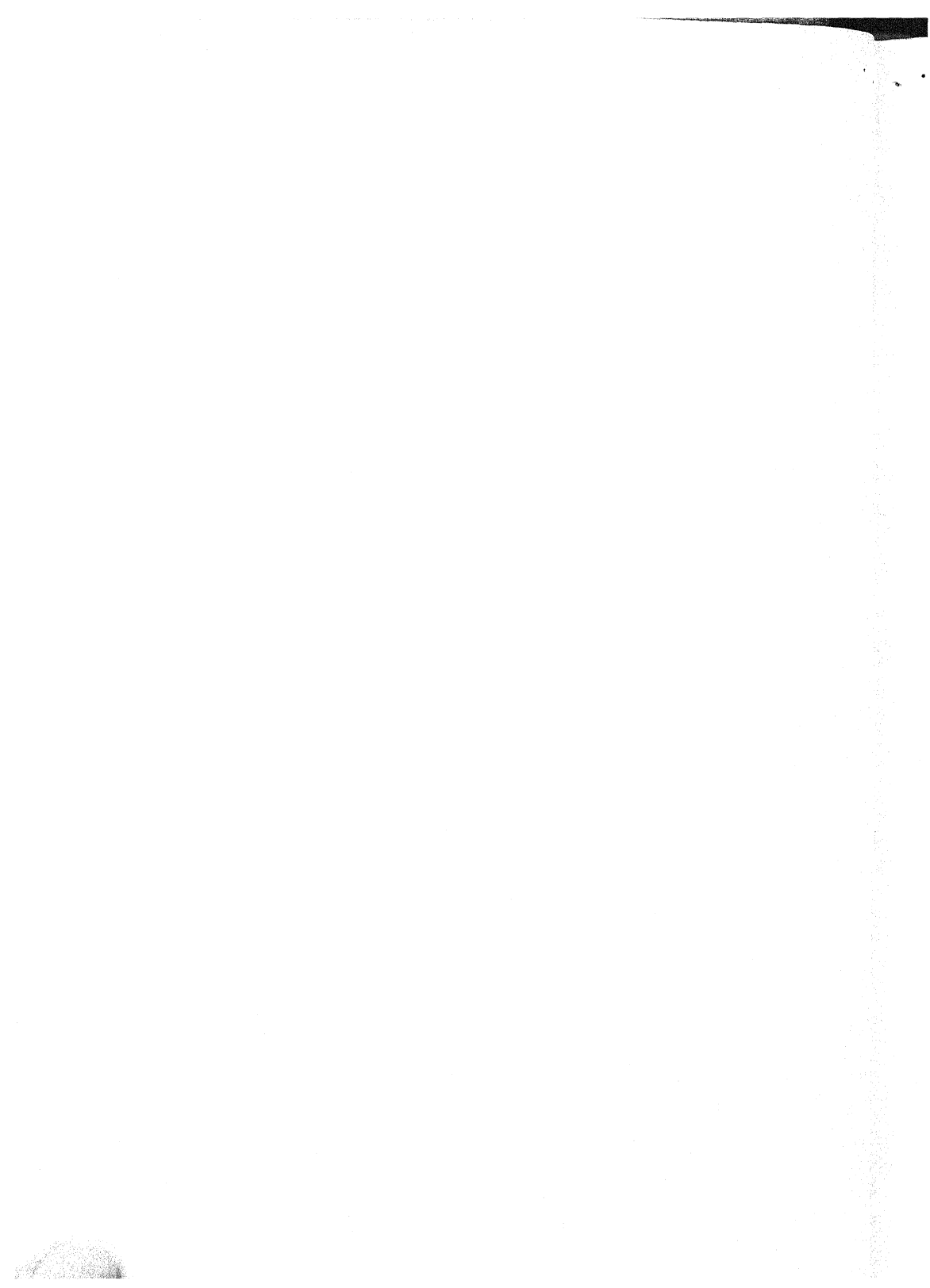
CHAUNCEY W. GOODRICH



GRACE WHITNEY HOFF

PART I

For unto whomsoever much is given...



GRACE WHITNEY HOFF



CHAPTER I

A FATHER'S DREAM

'I WILL make a boy of her!' Thus did David Whitney greet the advent of his first child, and the greeting was characteristic of the man who uttered it. Quick to accept a situation, good or bad, to improve it always with an eye to some definite goal — such was the father of this baby who should have been a boy.

There were several reasons why David Whitney longed for a son. Perhaps he thought of the Whitney tradition of large families in which male children predominated, of the original American Whitney with his eight sons, of his own father with his four. Consider the time — 1862 — and the place — a new city in America's thriving Middle West. Detroit, Michigan, was then an obscure town, still young enough to hope for a great destiny.

The United States in 1862 was on the verge of a great economic expansion. Just one month before this baby girl was born, Lincoln had read his Emancipation Proclamation to his Cabinet. The country was still engaged in Civil War, but Northern industry was stimulated by war-time demand and by the protection which high war tariffs afforded. At the same time the building of railroads and the improvement of water transportation were carrying more and more trade into the West.

On the tide of this westward expansion young David Whitney had gone, literally seeking his fortune. Only two

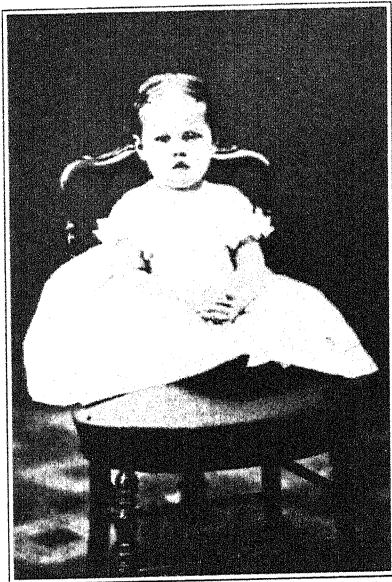
years before, he had left his boyhood home in Massachusetts, pushed out of the nest, as it were, by a kindly but ambitious father. Indeed, the memory of that leave-taking never failed to whet his own ambition. He had just turned thirty when his father took the step which changed the whole course of his life. He said to David, as he had said to David's elder brother three years before: 'You are thirty now. Here is your portion. Go out with it and make your fortune.'

He spoke with the restraint of a typical New England parent, but his words concealed deep feeling and careful thought as to his children's welfare. He had four sons and he knew he could never make them independent. But he could train them to the best of his ability, shelter them until they were grown, and then send them out to make their own way. The sacrifices this plan involved were considerable, but, as placed against the welfare of his boys, they mattered little. Could he have known that each of these sons would die a millionaire, it would merely have strengthened his satisfaction in the thought of having done his duty.

In contrast with this generous parent, the first Whitney ancestor to settle in America had a far different method of providing for his sons. A staunch Puritan, John Whitney had come from England in 1635, and settled in Watertown, Massachusetts. Here as an honored and well-to-do citizen, he spent the rest of his life. When past eighty years of age he died, he left six sons to carry on the name. Among these six, according to his will, he divided his property with great precision. Four of them received parcels of land, stock, and household effects, one of them with a 'sad colerid sute' included. Another had a 'trunk and one pair of sheetes and one paier of pillow beers and two pewter dishes and ye bed whereon I lie': but Jonathan Whitney got only 'one iron kittle and a good brass skillet,'



Three months



One year



Four years

GRACE WHITNEY



while to Benjamin, the last to be mentioned, was allotted 'the old mare if she live.'

As we have seen, young David Whitney was more fortunate. He received his portion, with life and a broad unconquered land before him. His business experiences thus far had been in lumber and in this business he decided to continue. Maine and New Hampshire forests were near-by, but his imagination had been aroused by stories of vast, untouched timber lands in Northern Michigan. A greater risk faced him there, he knew, but there was more profit for the winner, more scope for his ambition. He decided to take his slender inheritance and look the ground over for himself.

From Massachusetts to Michigan, though less than a thousand miles, was no easy trip in those days. He went part-way by railroad, and then up the Great Lakes, observing sharply what he saw about him. On the Lakes he saw enormous possibilities for trade. The Erie Canal, through which the raw materials of the great new West were brought to Eastern markets by way of the Great Lakes, was then being improved. Only about forty years before, these waters had seen their first steamboat *Walk-in-the-Water*; now steamers were a commonplace.

In his imagination this thoughtful young man saw not only steamers carrying Michigan logs to a growing population which demanded houses, pavements, newspapers, but he saw shipyards on the Michigan shore sending out a fleet of Great Lakes barges. These things he stored away in his mind for the future.

When the boat reached its destination on the western shore of Lake Erie, David Whitney landed and gazed with interest about the streets of Detroit. It was one of the earliest French settlements in the United States and was founded by Cadillac in 1701. It had become a bustling little town of nearly fifty thousand in 1860, rapidly put-

ting its frontier days behind it. Already a great trading center, located on the Detroit River, one of the best harbors of the entire Great Lakes system, and in the heart of a rich agricultural territory, it was the gateway for all commerce between the East and the West. A young man could hardly do wrong to cast his lot here, thought David Whitney.

Once in Detroit, the young traveler pushed on to the Northern Peninsula. What he found there filled him with enthusiasm. As he returned to Detroit, a plan for development took shape in his mind, but his own capital would barely serve to set things going. He must have help, and to whom could he turn so far away from those who knew him? Could he make a stranger see what he saw?

David Whitney was no braggart, but he had confidence in his own judgment. Accordingly he took his plan to one of the city's leading business men, Mr. Thomas Merrill. In the presence of this man, already successful, David said simply, 'Your reputation has made me bold to come and ask your help.' The older man listened to David's plan and, watching the firm mouth and intelligent dark eyes, became more and more impressed by what he heard. David finished and waited for the decision which meant so much.

'Young man,' said Mr. Merrill, 'I like your face. I'm going to help you.'

This interview was the beginning. David Whitney slowly but soundly laid the foundation of a great industry. And on the banks of the St. Lawrence he discovered treasure of another kind. Here lived Flora Ann McLaughlin, daughter of a Scotch Presbyterian family that had been among Canada's earliest settlers. Exactly his own age, she was endowed with singular charm — tender, yet not devoid of wit, deeply religious, yet untouched by the harshness and intolerance of Calvinism.

No engrossing adventure could compensate David Whitney for the lack of a home, for he was domestic by nature and by heritage. It was a crowning joy, therefore, when she consented to be his wife, and to establish with him an unpretentious home in Detroit.

Before their first child was born, David Whitney made great plans for a son to carry on his name. In deference to her husband, Mrs. Whitney also prayed for a boy. When a girl came instead, it was in keeping with the mother's character that the little newcomer was called Grace—Grace Nichols Whitney. Grace to her meant the mercy of God, and, in thus naming her first born, she blessed the child and showed her acceptance of His will.

The father reconciled himself in his own way. 'I will make a boy of her,' was what he said, and he started straightway to plan for her future.

CHAPTER II

A SIGNIFICANT LINEAGE

THE pioneer vision of David Whitney made possible his notable achievement in the business world, achievement which has enabled his daughter, by chosen philanthropic activities, to prove herself an effective doer on two continents. The father's vision and success, the daughter's genius in the realm of service, these together prompt a natural inquiry into the family inheritance.

From the long historical vista, it is not practicable to trace the entire line, but a few facts that stand out clearly, as marking prominent characteristics, are worthy of note.

The name Whitney is a very ancient one of English origin. Its derivation is somewhat obscure. One of the etymological theories supposes that Whitney has something to do with white. The name appears in ancient records as Wittney, Witenie, Witeney, Witteneye, Wytney, Whitney, and Whyteneye. The ancestral estate lies in the valley of the Wye near a mountain torrent. The probable explanation is that Whitney literally means white water.

Whatever the origin of the name, the family seems to have been a large and thriving one, of whom many members achieved distinction. The forbears of the Whitneys were originally French and came to England at the time of the Norman Conquest. Although no authentic record exists for the first one hundred and fifty years of their stay in England, it is known that the first Whitney to come to England called himself Eustace de Witteneye and settled in the Marches, that wild region on the borders of England and Wales which was disputed territory for

generations. The de Witteneys, as they came to be known, acquired estates and castles in Herefordshire on the banks of the Wye and maintained them by the sword. There were at one time one hundred and forty-nine petty lordships in the Marches, and the only law was that of superior strength. These were feudal times, and constant strife and warfare made up the lives of the border inhabitants.

The earliest mention of the family made in any public record so far discovered occurs in 1241 in a notice concerning one 'Robert de Wytteneye.' In that year King Henry III issued his writ to the sheriff of Herefordshire, directing him to make a list of knights' fees within his county. The return is still preserved, called *Testa de Nevill*, or, later, *Liber Feodorum*, a document much resembling the Domesday Book. The following entry occurs:

Hundred of Greytre. In the vill of Etun are contained two hides and a half ... Robert de Wytteneye [holds] one hide from the said Robert Tregoz....

In a Charter Roll of 1284, King Edward I granted lands to 'our dearly beloved and faithful Eustace de Whiteneye,' a namesake of the original Norman ancestor, Eustace de Witteneye.

The branches of the family were numerous, and no detailed information is available concerning the exact relationships, but from the thirteenth century on, references to one or another Whitney who achieved eminence are frequent. A Sir Randolph de Whitney, grandson of the original Eustace who first settled in the Marches, accompanied Richard Cœur de Lion on the Crusades in the twelfth century, and other members of the family as well are said to have taken part in them. A witness to this fact is the family coat of arms whose central feature

consists of a shield with blue ground, on which is a large cross formed of checkered squares of gold and red, above which is a bull's head, cut off at the neck, black, with silver horns tipped with red. A cross on an ancient coat of arms indicates that the arms were originally those of a Crusader. The following verses written with reference to the original Eustace de Whiteneye also indicate a connection with the Crusades:

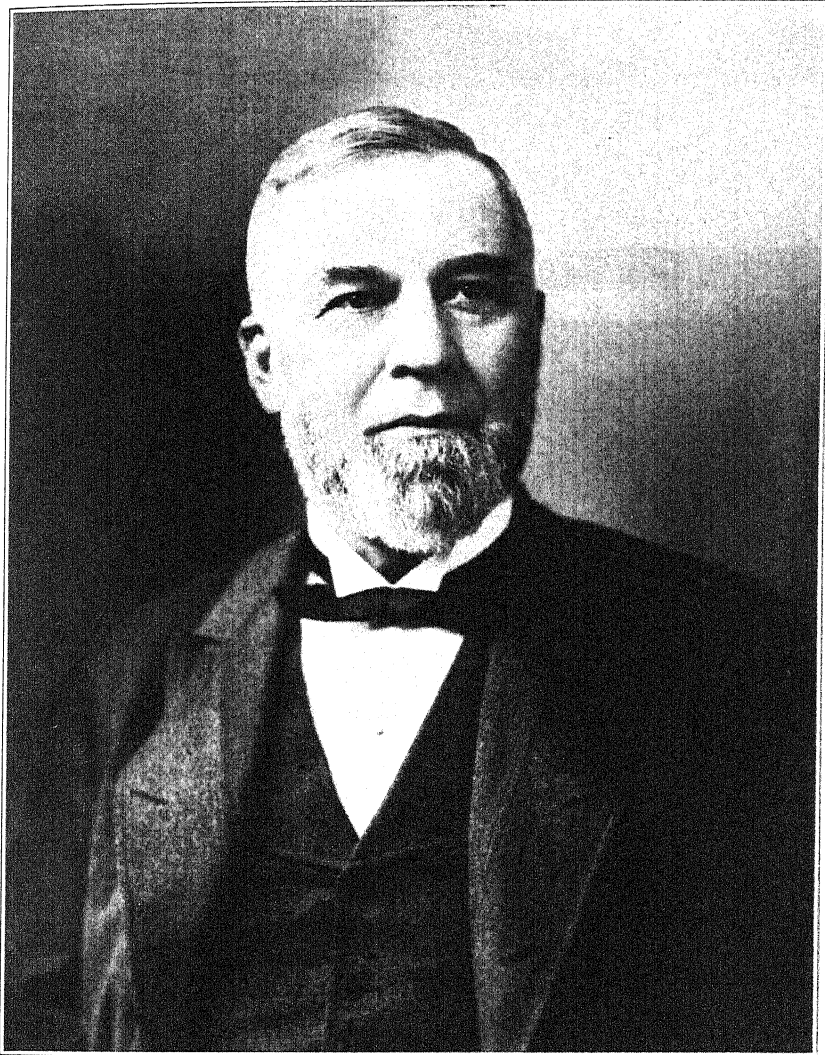
From him descended cross-legged knights
Famed for their faith in warlike fights
Against the bloody cannibal whom they
Destroyed both great and small.

The phrase 'cross-legged knights' implies a Crusader, and the reference to the 'bloody cannibal' and the faith of the knights clinches the matter.

In 1394 a Sir Robert Whitney held the post of Knight Marshal at the Court of King Richard II. In this capacity he served as superintendent of the palace police and royal bodyguard, as marshal of the household, and he dined at the King's table.

Another Sir Robert Whitney was the first of his family to be honored with a seat in Parliament. After this, however, there is a long list of distinguished members of the family who were similarly honored. Still another Sir Robert Whitney followed the fortunes of war against France. By 1420 the conquest of France was complete, and on December 6th of the same year, the King gave out the following commission to his loyal adherent:

Concerning the appointment of the Captain for Vire, the King to all, to whom, &c... greeting, Know ye that we being fully confident of the trustworthiness and shrewdness of our beloved and faithful Robert Whitney, have constituted and appointed him, the same Robert, Captain of our Castle and town of Vire, To have and to occupy the office aforesaid as long as he shall please us....



DAVID WHITNEY, JR., 1830-1900
Father of Grace Whitney

Two ancestral homes were held by the Whitneys. The earliest was Whitney Castle in Herefordshire, for five hundred years the seat of the direct line of the family. Throughout the turbulent years of border warfare, the castle remained in the possession of the family. It was once sacked and burned by the Welsh in 1403, but was restored. As late as 1675 it seems to have been in existence, but, despite the fact that it is located upon the ordnance maps of the British Government of that day, no trace of its ruins exists today. Tradition has it that the neighboring river changed its course in 1730 and that beneath its waters are still to be seen remnants of the original masonry. The other family seat was Clifford Castle bestowed upon the Whitneys by a grateful sovereign in return for their loyal support. This structure existed well on into the nineteenth century, but today survives only as crumbling ruins.

Twice the Whitney blood was intermingled by marriage with that of royalty. Early in the sixteenth century, James Whitney, then the head of the house, married Blanche Milbourne, a member of the Plantagenet family and a descendant of the seventh Earl of Oxford. Later in the same century, another Sir Robert Whitney married Sybil Baskerville, also a descendant of William the Conqueror.

Throughout its long course, the history of the Whitney family displays romantic aspects. One of the ladies of the house has been celebrated in song and story. Rosamond, the 'fair Rosamond,' was beloved by Henry II, who according to legend built an intricate labyrinth within his manor at Woodstock in order to conceal her from the eyes of the world. Of her a contemporary wrote:

Her crisped locks like threads of gold
Appeared to each man's sight;
Her sparkling eyes, like orient pearls,
Did cast a heavenly light,

GRACE WHITNEY HOFF

The blood within her crystal cheeks
 Did such a color drive,
 As though the lillye and the rose
 For mastership did strive.

Another poet, the Welsh bard, Lewis Glyn Cothi, celebrated the marriage of one of the numerous Sir Robert Whitneys to Alice, daughter of Robert Vaughn. A portion of the original in literal translation from the Welsh follows:

'Tis enough if he choose Mistress Alice to marry:
 Of a sun among stars his selection will be.
 The parish can't number his men in plate armour
 And his steeds and his spearsmen the battle to join.
 There sits Mistress Alice, all retired in her bower,
 With her money and treasures so grandly arrayed:
 On a Monday she puts on a fine robe of damask,
 Of camlet like velvet, with pattern displayed.
 O'er her cheek and her temple, of gold her attire is:
 She wears garlands and scarlet in dignity great:
 For the salmon's own lifetime she'll call upon Jesus.
 For nine lives of a man shall she bear her estate.

A Sir Robert Whitney once declined the Order of the Bath from Henry VIII at the time of the King's marriage to Anne Boleyn, probably out of religious scruples. His son, John Whitney, held the post of page to a daughter of this union, later the great Queen Elizabeth. A different kind of romance is indicated in the lives of two of the Whitneys, each holding the title of Captain. Captain James Whitney was 'a gentleman highwayman,' a prototype of Captain Faggus in Blackmore's 'Lorna Doone,' while Captain Thomas Whitney followed the sea. He was an associate of Sir Walter Raleigh in the latter's last disastrous voyage in search of El Dorado. He was captain of the Encounter, the largest of Raleigh's vessels, and, three years after Raleigh's execution, was buried beside his commander, in 1621. Raleigh referred to him in a letter



MRS. DAVID WHITNEY
Mother of Grace Whitney

In the seventeenth century, one of the Whitneys crossed the ocean to America and established a new line of the family, which it is our purpose here to trace. The founder of this American branch of the family was John Whitney, baptized on July 20, 1592, in London. He was the third son of Thomas Whitney, 'gentleman,' a descendant of the original Whitneys of Wye in Herefordshire, whose uncle, Sir James Whitney, knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 1570, was the hereditary head of the house. Thomas Whitney placed his son John in the famous Westminster School, now known as Saint Peter's College, and when the boy was fourteen years of age, apprenticed him to William Pring, a 'Freeman' of the Merchant Taylors' Company, then the most famous and prosperous of all the great trade guilds. On March 13, 1614, John Whitney, at the age of about twenty-one, became a full-fledged member. Soon after, he married and took up his residence at Isleworth-on-the-Thames, where three of his children were born.

A man of Puritan leanings, however, John Whitney found much to be dissatisfied with in the England of his day. Civil and religious liberty were at a low ebb, and, although he never seems to have cut loose from the Anglican Church while in England, he eventually prepared to leave the land of his ancestors. Early in April, 1635, he registered with his wife Elinor and his five sons as passengers on the ship Elizabeth and Ann. The vessel sailed in May. Probably about the first of July they arrived in Boston Harbor, from which John pushed up the Charles River to settle at Watertown, Massachusetts.

Once in America this early Whitney seems to have established himself rapidly. On March 3, 1636, by vote of the General Court of the Colony, he was admitted a 'Freeman.' In the same year he acquired five hundred acres, a large tract of land for those times, and later pur-

chased one hundred and twenty more. In 1637 he was elected a 'Selectman,' a position which he held for many years. Later he held other offices, among them that of constable. All in all, he seems to have been an able, conscientious citizen, respected and trusted by his fellow-citizens, who acquired during the course of his life considerable property to leave to his six sons. He lived to be past eighty years of age, and his will, made upon his deathbed, has been preserved. It is of considerable interest to the modern reader on account of the quaintness of spelling and the simplicity of statement. The homely details are like a breath from the past in which the American colonial era lives again. And not the least refreshing is the simply expressed, sturdy piety of John Whitney himself.

Thus is rounded out the life of the first American Whitney. It is from this staunch old Puritan ancestor that the numerous Whitneys of America are descended. Most of the members of this family settled in and around Watertown. Some of them were connected with the American Revolutionary War after the fashion of their military forbears in England. But the majority followed more peaceful pursuits, holding honorable positions in the life of the new settlements. Indeed, one of the American Whitneys achieved international distinction, Eli Whitney, the inventor of the cotton gin. In the early months of the French Revolution, he was constructing this machine, the use of which nourished that institution, slave labor, one of the causes of the struggle which culminated in civil war. Previously one laborer could separate only a pound of cotton a day. With the cotton gin hundreds of pounds could be separated.

The eighth generation after the emigrant, John Whitney, produced David Whitney, father of Grace Whitney.

CHAPTER III

SCHOOL DAYS

THE home into which Grace Whitney was born on October 22, 1862, was dominated by a man of affairs. Yet for his family he showed nothing but love and tenderness; especially did he adore the daughter who should have been a boy. It was enriched and sweetened by a mother of strong personality and unaffected charm. From both her parents Grace inherited qualities of physical and moral stamina. The home was simple, and baby Grace was blessed in this as in so many other ways.

As the city developed, the family moved to more pretentious homes. At an early age, Grace ran away from the Woodward Avenue home to the former residence on Madison Avenue. When found, she protested that she liked the old home better. Every nook and cranny she loved, even the cupboard where she had hidden and made her family believe the gypsies had stolen her.

This runaway child had a mind of her own. Her confident gray eyes evoked respect as well as affection even from the father who expected much of his eldest daughter, for she showed signs of determination beyond her years.

One day, while Mr. Whitney was in conference with a business friend, little Grace rushed into the room. Tripping over her father's foot in her haste to reach him, she put her hands out on a hot stove, so hot that she left on it the imprint of her fingers. Yet not a sound escaped the child's lips in front of the stranger. Only when her father comforted her afterward did she sob bitterly with the pain.

When the time came for Grace to attend school, her father determined that she should be given more than a

superficial training, with an accomplishment or two, as was customary for girls in those days. He had faith in her intelligence and was anxious to equip her for life as well as if she had been a boy.

She began at the age of six to attend the neighborhood school. In this new world her high spirits might have caused trouble had it not been for the strong attachment she formed for her teachers. Because she loved them, a word was enough to shatter the most mischievous plot. Besides, they held the key to a world which she wanted to know more about, which would help her to emulate the achievements of her father.

How did it happen that Grace's teachers were not the objects of torment and dislike that most children make them? Perhaps she was unusually fortunate, but one cannot help thinking that they were probably very much like other teachers, and that the secret of Grace's devotion lay within her own affectionate nature.

When she was twelve years of age, her father decided it was time to send Grace away to school, and, with the same care that he gave to his business problems, he chose what he thought the most suitable place. This was Hellmuth College, a Canadian international school in London, Ontario, not far from her mother's old home, and about one hundred miles from Detroit.

Grace was only thirteen years old when she entered Hellmuth. This was her first venture away from home, and it is not hard to imagine the excitement of getting ready and the eagerness of the young traveler as she neared her destination. Was there a wave of disappointment when she first saw the tiny bedroom allotted to her? No one will ever know. A bed, a washstand, a dressing-table, and a chair, all in plainest wood, were its only furnishings. Material comforts of every sort were lacking. As the bedrooms were unheated and had no running water, it

was necessary to break the ice in the pitcher on many a wintry morning. Moreover, school requirements were high, and in all the details of their lives the girls were severely restricted.

Perhaps Mr. Whitney thought a certain amount of hardship in youth a requisite to greatness. At any rate, he evidently made no mistake in his choice of schools, for Grace thrived and was happy. Not even the rigid discipline discouraged her, though at Hellmuth a misdemeanor was dealt with promptly and with no theoretical compunctions. Not many punishments were visited on Grace, but one, for no great offense, made a lasting impression. She was forced to rise even earlier than usual and walk eight times around a very sizable lawn before breakfast, committing to memory, as she went, the names of the books of the Bible, and two parables. The cause of the punishment has long since been forgotten, but the names of the books of the Bible have remained graven on her memory.

During her first year at school, Grace found her new studies so absorbing that she took little time for social affairs. The result was a nearly perfect record at the end of the year, but she had made few friends among the girls. They held aloof from the brilliant pupil who had come among them. This aloofness grieved her, for, young as she was, she realized that human contacts were more to be valued than all her studies put together. She decided to remedy matters, and, with her natural fund of high spirits and a gift for organization, it was not long before the girls looked to her as their social leader. The affection of the girls in the literary society, of which she became chairman, made her realize for the first time the joy of working for others.

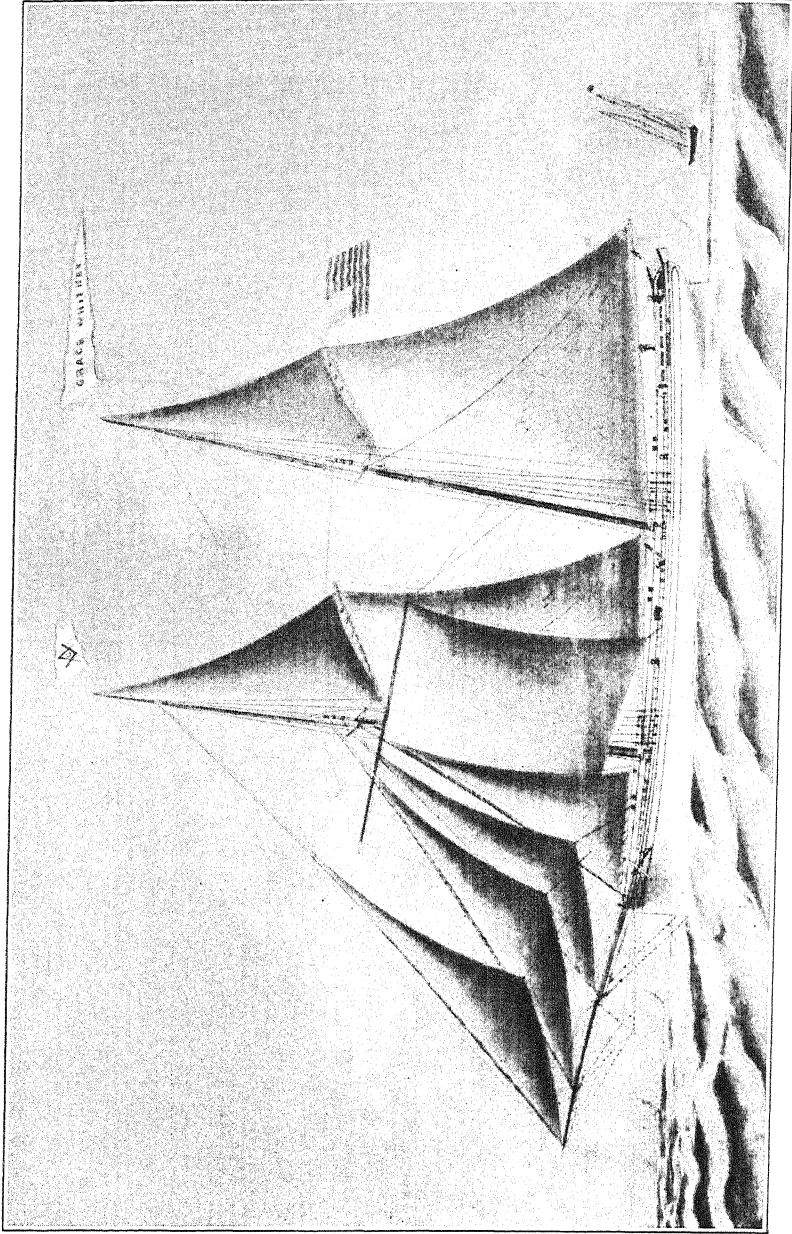
Grace Whitney spent three years in the rigorous atmosphere of Hellmuth and in those three years achieved a



GRACE NICHOLS WHITNEY
Nine years

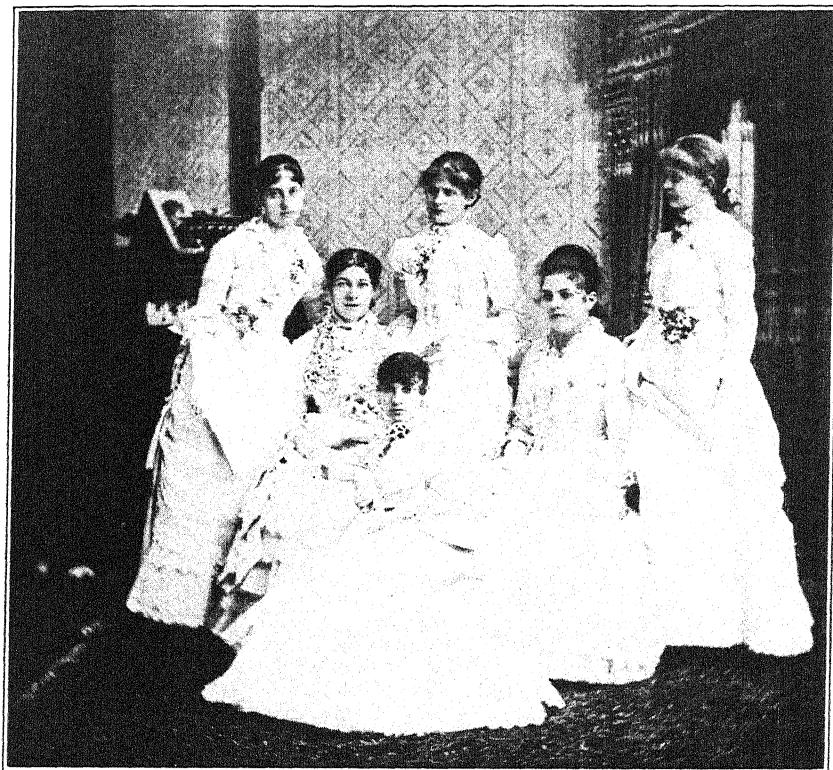


JOHN JACOB HOFF
Ten years

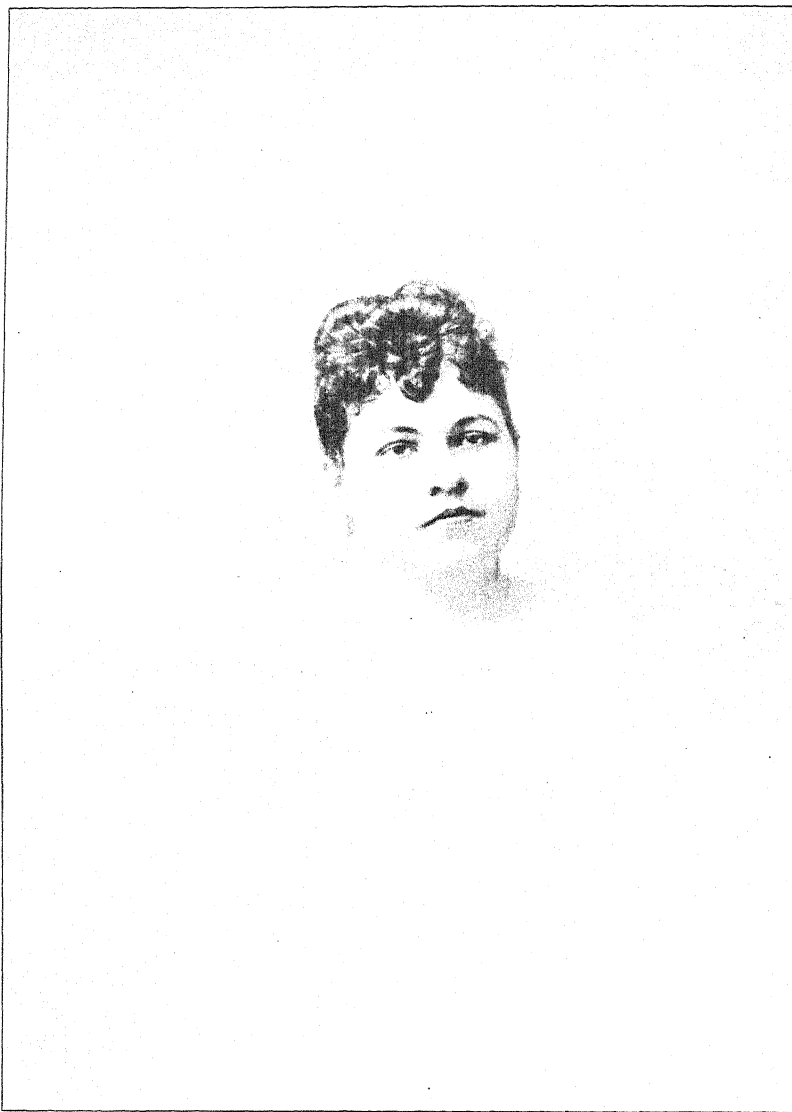


'GRACE WHITNEY'

One of the schooners of the Lake fleet owned by David Whitney, Jr.



FIRST GRADUATING CLASS FROM LIGGETT SCHOOL, DETROIT
Grace Whitney second from right



GRACE WHITNEY
Twenty-eight years

solid foundation for whatever life might bring. Then came a change which brought a new and powerful influence into her life. Her mother's health had failed until she became an invalid, and it was necessary for Grace to stay at home. Fortunately, a new school was just being opened in Detroit, half a mile from the Whitney house, at first conducted by the daughters of a clergyman in their own home. The Liggett School was destined to have a notable future. It offered only the conventional courses for 'young ladies,' but Mr. Whitney deemed it from every angle an ideal place for his eldest daughter to complete her education.

He wanted her near-by in order that she might begin to familiarize herself with his own interests, for he still held to his first resolution, 'I will make a boy of her,' and looked forward to the day when, even though a girl, she would become his assistant. It was time also for her to begin sharing in the social life of Detroit, in which she would later have to take a prominent part. Moreover, there was an opportunity for her to continue studying music, which had been from the first one of her keenest interests and enjoyments.

Conditions were now far from conducive to study. The demands of social life were increasing, and the home on Woodward Avenue was becoming a veritable social center. As Grace had already decided that life held more for her than a mere conventional round, she asked her father if she might live at the school where serious work would be easier. In answer he took her over that very night and saw her established in a tiny room — the Liggetts' first boarding-pupil. She came home only for week-ends, leaving the school Friday evening and returning Monday morning.

It was a fortunate thing that one unusual personality was to be found among the teachers at the Liggett School.

Miss Ella Liggett was not only a woman of superior intellect, but of a sympathetic and understanding soul. To her, more than to any other of her teachers, Grace responded with an awakened sense of the seriousness of life and the sacredness of the stewardship imposed by superior advantages. From these days may well be dated the beginning of a passion for service founded upon the idea of *noblesse oblige*. Yet now, as in later years, there was a total absence of any condescension in her efforts in behalf of others.

Grace Whitney had always a vivid personality, and at sixteen, when she entered the Liggett School, she was at the height of girlhood's charm. But more than all this, one had only to know this vivacious girl to feel the real sweetness and depth of her nature. Miss Liggett half-expected her new pupil to be a little spoiled and unmanageable, but found her earnest in her work, lovable, and singularly responsive.

At eighteen, after three years of work and play, Grace left the Liggett School. Honors were crowding in upon her. One week before graduation, she gave a piano recital and received her certificate from the Apel School, warmly praised for her technique and interpretation of the great composers.

She awaited graduation, the first important ceremony of her life, with great expectation. She would miss the happy schoolgirl world and, most of all, the daily contact with Miss Ella Liggett, but she was eager to go on to other interests, eager to taste what life had before her. At eighteen, she felt herself a woman grown, ready for a woman's work and more.

Graduation day arrived; Grace was class historian. The exercises were held in church, the girls walking down the aisle in their white Swiss muslin dresses trimmed with Valenciennes lace, carrying little white Victorian bouquets.

The Reverend John Donaldson Liggett distributed the rolled and beribboned diplomas with fitting solemnity. When Grace felt hers in her hand, it seemed for a moment as though life could hold nothing more.

Yet this feeling was only temporary. Grace's vision held more than this, for in her ears rang the words Miss Liggett had once spoken: 'Idleness can never be your lot. Because you know where to gather rich supplies of grace, you will continue to bless and be blessed.'

CHAPTER IV

APPRENTICESHIP

AFTER graduation, life moved rapidly and joyously, for Grace was now a full-fledged young lady. She lacked nothing, it seemed, to make her happy. Her father, as always, was unwavering in his devotion to his family; he stood quietly ready to provide them, and especially the daughter of whom he was so proud, with everything the heart could desire.

The one shadow in Grace's life was the failing health of her mother, who had become a confirmed invalid. In spite of her invalidism, even when her physical suffering was greatest, her peaceful smile showed an unbroken faith in Christ's love. She read her Bible often, or sang in a soft voice the old familiar hymns, by her very presence shedding sweetness and warmth over the family circle.

Grace longed to go to college, but felt that her place was at home, where more and more responsibilities were falling on her capable shoulders. She had also gained her father's confidence until he grew to depend on her intelligent interest in his affairs.

Among the young people of Detroit, Grace had a host of friends. The social life in this city of a hundred thousand inhabitants was almost like that of a family, and now that Grace was through school, she was free to take a more active part. She had no lack of opportunity, for no gathering was commonplace if Grace Whitney was there.

Among her admirers — and there were many — was a young man by the name of John Everett Evans. He was a likable young person, a few years her senior, and soon romance came into their lives. They became engaged, with the approval of her family, and in November, 1881,

less than a year after her graduation, Grace Whitney became a bride.

Eighteen was by no means considered too young for a suitable marriage. The growth of economic independence for women, and with it social freedom, had hardly begun. Married life, therefore, offered girls more freedom and a wider career than anything else. In those days, as long as a woman remained single, she was protected by her family and hedged about by convention. But if she were the head of her own household, even at eighteen she could take a respected place among the other matrons of society.

And Grace Whitney herself had no aspirations which did not include marriage as their cornerstone. It was with a sense of dedication, therefore, as well as of joy that she became the wife of Mr. Evans, and went to live in the beautiful home given them by her father near the family homestead.

Before long this light-hearted bride, so eager, so vivacious, found that marriage alone did not fill her life, and for several years she did not know the wonders of motherhood. Moreover, within six months of her marriage her own mother died, bringing Grace her first real sorrow and with it a touch of restlessness. The possibilities of life stretched out before her, beckoning this way and that. Which direction should she take? These, though she did not know it then, were the decisive moments of her life.

As Miss Liggett had said, idleness could never be her lot, nor did aimless activity appeal to her. She might have filled her life with a busy round of social duties, as many a woman has done before and since, but there was something in Grace Whitney which demanded the more durable satisfactions of life.

Marriage was bringing with it a spiritual coming of age,

during which the religion which had always been part of her background became a driving force, giving earnestness and purpose to her life. As a child, Grace had grown up in the religion which had meant so much to her mother. It was the day of early conversions as well as the day of early marriages, and she remembered well the incident which had prompted her own first confession of faith. She was about thirteen when it happened. At her father's gate one night she and a very dear childhood friend, Olive Farrand, afterward her bridesmaid and a close friend all through life, were lingering over their farewell as young girls do. Olive had something she wanted to say, but it was hard to bring the words out.

'Grace,' she said finally, 'why aren't you a Christian? You have so much influence over others, think how much good you could do, if you would only make this decision.'

The fervor of her friend stirred an instant and sincere response.

'I will be a Christian,' Grace had said, 'from this moment.' And that night she made a vow that her life should be dedicated to the service of the Lord, and from that vow she never wavered.

And so, now, as she sought new interests, she resolved upon philanthropy. The young bride chose as her first field of endeavor the Thompson Home for Old Ladies. Her presence there brought untold joy into the monotonous lives of the shut-ins. They feasted their eyes on her health and physical beauty no less than they enjoyed the warmth of her personality. Before long these women, with little left to live for, became so jealous of her attentions that she had to pay each one a personal call when making the weekly visit.

They trusted her because she made them feel that their lives really mattered to her. As death approached, they confided to her their last wishes, their desires concerning

the disposal of their choicest possessions, and even begged her, young as she was, to help prepare them for their last sleep. In time she became their treasurer, and organized sales for the bits of needlework which they made. Their devotional services were in her hands, and she presided at their piano and had a spoken message of encouragement.

It was also at this time that she became interested in the Women's Exchange and Decorative Arts Society, an organization in Detroit designed to serve gentlewomen. If a woman of breeding in those days happened to need money, it was unthinkable for her to enter domestic service or a factory. To become a teacher required normal-school training, and no other occupations were open to her, for the typewriter, which was the largest single factor in the development of economic freedom for women, had been but recently placed on the market. Sewing and cooking were the only things she could turn to, and how could she market these wares? Women of this type could not solicit the public themselves, and no agencies existed for handling such goods. It was to meet this situation that the Women's Exchanges were organized. The first Exchange came into being in 1877, in Boston, and soon the movement spread to all the larger cities of the United States. The adoption of the plan in Detroit, when the need came, was natural. The Detroit Exchange was still in its infancy when Grace Whitney became interested in its work, but she soon became its president and under her direction the organization prospered.

Other activities which came to occupy more and more of her time were connected with the Westminster Presbyterian Church. The fact that several high-school teachers attended the church inspired her to organize a literary society, which soon brought together all the young people of the parish. She also taught a Sunday-School class and was at the head of the women's work in the church.

But perhaps the most significant of all her work was a Friday night reunion and social hour in her own home. This was a venture which showed both courage and vision in one who was still but a girl herself. All about her in Detroit were girls and women who needed more faith in God, more joy, more friendliness. She wanted to become their friend as well as their teacher. Accordingly, she opened her home every Friday evening and spared no pains to give those who came a happy, friendly time. No one was excluded who cared to come. No window-shades were drawn that evening, and the bright lights, the vistas of happy girls within, the strains of music, drew many a passer-by, who in turn brought others until the capacity of the house was taxed.

It was characteristic of this young philanthropist that, with so little experience or precedent to draw from, her work should have had such a wide appeal. Instinctively she knew how to win people, not only to her cause, but to herself. The depths of her sympathy and the vigor of her enthusiasm caused her to neglect nothing. The success of her weekly meeting was due to the fact that it was so much more than a religious gathering. Here the girls could enjoy the warmth of a real home, beautiful flowers, music, and intimate talks by one who made herself their equal.

One thing the girls enjoyed would have surprised their hostess very much. 'She was a kind of beauty spot,' said one of the girls many years afterward; 'every girl that ever looked at her loved her because, though well dressed, she was absolutely unconscious of herself.'

An outgrowth of the Friday evening gatherings was a still further step toward more intimate human contacts. As the number of her guests grew larger, she perceived that many of them longed for help with problems which they could only discuss alone with her. From making special appointments with those who had the courage to

ask, she came to set aside one hour each day when anyone might come to her for advice, to ask a favor, or more and more often to thank her for some kindness already received. Little did she think that at this point in her career, by setting aside a daily reception hour, she was establishing a lifelong custom, and one which was to be one of her most valuable services in the field of philanthropy. Nothing was allowed to interfere with this daily hour. Instead of letting social demands encroach on her other duties, she gave them less and less place in her thoughts.

Thus, during the early years of her marriage, Grace Whitney made her first venture in philanthropy. But seven years of married life passed before one of the greatest experiences of life came to her. In 1888 a daughter was born. Little Elaine filled that need in her mother's life which everyone has — that need of a second self, with which to start life over again. Not even her baby, however, was allowed to absorb Grace Whitney's thought to the exclusion of her other work. Rather it seemed that the sudden outpouring of love which motherhood brought made her long to embrace as many as possible in its magic circle.

When Elaine was four years of age, her father died. This event brought to the young widow a desire for a further deepening of her spiritual life, which she conceived was to be obtained by service to others. She was again confronted by the choice between worldliness and service, as everything conspired to draw her into the maelstrom of social life. At the critical time, however, a new interest came into her existence, almost as if it had been projected at that moment as a special field for her endeavors. If there had ever been any doubt as to her choice, this threw the balance once and for all on the side of humanity.

CHAPTER V

A DECADE OF SERVICE

THE whole Western world at this time was feeling a new impulse. One hundred years before, the French Revolution had liberated a spirit of pity such as had not been since the early days of Christianity.

The new sense of social responsibility which thus came into being with the French Revolution, which manifested itself in England in the passage of laws regulating child labor, and other ameliorating legislation, was strongly felt also in the United States.

America responded to the new impulse with the vigor of a new nation. The range of human sympathy widened tremendously. While Abolitionists fought for the freedom of the Negroes, educators founded schools for their instruction. Missions both at home and in foreign lands received a new impulse. Settlement work was begun in the cities, and a better housing movement had its birth in New York.

All these activities were the result of a new approach to philanthropy, an approach to which industry itself showed the way. Industry had demonstrated that what one man could not do alone could be done by combining the resources and brains of several. In the same way it was seen that organized charity could accomplish what a man or a woman even with considerable wealth could not hope to do alone.

Fortunately for the world, Grace Whitney was born at the flood tide of the new era. When she became a widow in 1892, Detroit was already beginning the establishment of organized charity, and she, through her philanthropical

activities, had acquired the necessary experience to take a decisive part.

Although Detroit was an early French settlement, as a city it was younger than those on the Eastern seaboard and yet not so large. The very rapidity of its growth brought with it many social problems. In 1860, when David Whitney first came to Detroit, its population was forty-six thousand. Within twenty years it had passed the one hundred thousand mark, and in 1890 over two hundred thousand made Detroit their home.

Among the leading industries were the manufacture of ready-made clothing, shoes, cigars, and pharmaceutical products, all of which employed large numbers of women. Through her various activities, Grace Whitney had reached a great many of these, but it was impossible for one person to serve them all. A Young Woman's Home and a Young Women's Christian Association were being considered, inspired by the Young Women's Christian Associations in other cities.

The movement had come to America from England, where the first Associations were formed. After several conferences with prominent citizens, it was decided to begin the work of the Young Women's Christian Association, and a constitution was adopted in March, 1893 — the same year that Henry Ford drove his first gas-propelled motor car through the streets of Detroit to the wonder and amusement of the crowd.

Because of her interest in girls, Grace Whitney followed developments toward the new organization with great concern. The selection of a president for the Association was a critical matter. Grace Whitney had already proved her influence over girls, and she was obviously an organizer. It was not strange, therefore, that she should have been asked to become the Association's first president.

When the proposal had been made to her and she had

declined, a girl who had been in the family for several years exclaimed: 'Just think what it would mean to the young girls of Detroit if you could only be the president!' That spontaneous remark brought new realization of the opportunities this office would bring for wider service. Yet she must needs think what accepting it would mean to her, for she had been in the throes of another great decision, one which entailed possibly the greatest sacrifice of her life.

Though a mother, a widow, and for more than ten years a philanthropist, she was still but thirty years old. At this time her father was eminently successful in his business career, and, although Grace Whitney had been matured by the experiences of marriage, life for her, too, had hardly begun. Youth, beauty, vitality in abundance were still hers.

After her husband's death, she had made, on one of her trips abroad, a friendship in Paris which she treasured deeply following her return. In spite of separation, the friendship ripened into love, and, when Grace Whitney was asked to become Detroit's first Young Women's Christian Association president, she was already engaged to be married.

Knowing that marriage would take her away from home, away from the father who depended on her, she had told no one until she could decide what was best for her to do. Twelve years before, she had given up college to be near her mother, but the present decision was far more momentous than that. It offered her in the fullest that career of wife and home-maker of which she had dreamed as a girl. Yet she had disciplined herself too long in placing the needs of others before her own to think only of herself even now. Could she not put off her happiness a while? Her father was not well enough to bear the blow. When he was stronger, she would tell him. And so, unaware of his

daughter's engagement, David Whitney continued to enjoy the comfort of her presence. And thus, one decision already made, she was faced with the necessity of making another — the acceptance or refusal of the presidency of the Young Women's Christian Association with its wider opportunity for service.

The decision was quickly made. She accepted, and, having once accepted, she threw herself heart and soul into the work. For Grace Whitney to become interested in anything was for her to take it unto herself and nourish it with the best of her rich, constructive personality. Building organizations was as natural to her as turning little enterprises into great ones was natural to her father.

In this work was scope for her vision, her executive powers, her personal magnetism. She interested people who were formerly indifferent by her own enthusiasm. During the endless committee meetings in which foundations were laid, she astonished the other members by her amazing vitality. They soon found that the source of this power was more than physical. Whenever a problem arose, their president would say very simply, 'Let us pray about this.' With bowed heads the group would then turn to God as to a familiar earthly presence, and the problem was bound to yield a solution.

Experiences with her social classes had taught her how to touch a young girl's life most effectively. She saw to it that the two rooms chosen for the Young Women's Christian Association headquarters were not only comfortable and spacious, but attractive. She also placed special emphasis on the noon hour, believing that employed girls needed a restful place in which to eat their lunch and would respond to an organization which provided it. Not only were refreshments ready for the girls when they came in, but friendly greetings and music carried them for the moment out of their workaday world.

Invitations to the rooms were given personally. At a morning committee meeting, the President would say, 'Go out today into the shops and ask the girls to come here, and, if they have their lunch in a basket, tell them to bring it.'

She herself never lost an opportunity to make known the work of the Association. One day while shopping she saw a tiny salesgirl struggling to reach a box on a high shelf. Thought was action. She stepped to the girl's side and reached the box. In amazement the girl turned to the supple, athletic figure beside her and gasped her thanks.

'You can do that, too,' said the new friend, 'if you will join the gymnasium class at the Young Women's Christian Association.'

Thus the work grew. At the end of the first year, the Association counted five hundred and seventy-eight members and the noon rest committee from the beginning had served thousands of girls. During the second year membership passed the one thousand mark, and the Association began to be known as a model one.

Notices hung in factories, railroad stations, and at boat-landings brought many newcomers seeking and finding assistance. Grace Whitney's inspiring work continued. She gave unsparingly of both time and money, and never for a moment did she forget those little touches of beauty, which, because they are unnecessary and unexpected, add so much to the richness of life. Every Sunday and Thursday she arranged flowers in the rooms. After the large mass meetings, at which she addressed young women, she would often single out individuals who appealed to her as lonely or friendless and to such a one she would give a rose from the flowers found on the speaker's table. On one occasion, when she called upon a girl in Detroit, whom she found dying in dire poverty, she noted ash-like fragments by the bedside. When she asked if they were a form of

medicine, the girl replied, 'Yes, the sweetest and best of medicines, the rose you gave me.'

During these years a young girl came into the organization who found in her a much-needed friend. She once said: 'Our president is one of those people God uses to answer His prayers. I prayed for help and she sent me money through the mail.' She never had enough money at a time to repay her debt in full, but whenever she could she would leave an envelope at her benefactor's door with ten or fifteen cents in it. This girl, who was befriended at a timely hour, dedicated her own life to service and is now teaching and training a group of the earth's forgotten and disinherited children.

Outdoor life was then a novelty and opportunities for girls earning their own living to have a vacation in the country were rare. Deciding to make the experiment, two committee members fitted up tents, offering to Association members at low rates a place where they might get both physical rest and spiritual growth. At the end of the season the committee members divided the deficit between them.

The second year the same two members wanted to put up a wooden building, but could not finance it alone. With some hesitancy they carried their plan to their president for her advice. Her first remark was, 'You are not planning a good enough building.'

Although seemingly too busy to hear their story out, she understood exactly what they had in mind and at once perceived the possibilities of such a place. But they must have more room and better equipment which her ready brain visualized. Did they need money to carry out these plans? She would see that they had it. The important thing was to do it well, if at all.

The work progressed under her direction, and in the summer of 1895 the Grace Cottages — for they were

named in her honor — received their first guests. At the opening on July 4th, she planned for as many as possible to be present. Through her influence the Michigan Central Railroad put a car at the disposal of the Young Women's Christian Association, thus enabling seventy-five young women to spend their holiday at the Cottages.

The first thing they did upon their arrival was to gather about the door and unite with their president in a word of praise to their Heavenly Father, and prayer for His blessing on their new homes, for Grace Whitney intended them to seem like homes to every girl that came. And homes in the full sense of the word they turned out to be. The Grace Cottages more than fulfilled the purpose for which they were originally intended.

Throughout these early years of her philanthropy, one source of Grace Whitney's influence was her ability as a public speaker. Unlike some women who have to appear in public, she never descended to idle nothings to fill up the time. Whatever her audience, she could rouse a response, for she spoke to it full-heartedly out of her own experience.

Among her listeners was often one who drank in her words with greater attention than any of the others. David Whitney, whose name had become a household word in Detroit, was an unobtrusive figure, with keen dark eyes that seemed to fathom even the thought of one in conversation with him, a mind that grasped possibilities as well as realities, and a far-sightedness that brought success to all his efforts. He was a man of great responsibilities, yet he would often excuse himself from an important conference that he might be one of those to hear his daughter address her large and attentive audiences.

For a short period in these busy years Grace Whitney's health suffered, but soon full vigor returned. Small wonder it was that she should have become exhausted for a time

with all her activities, for her work as president of the Young Women's Christian Association had by no means curtailed her interest in many other directions.

Her Friday night gatherings of young women and her work at the Thompson Home for Old Ladies continued, as well as the daily reception hour. Often this hour had to be expanded so as to accommodate all who wished to relate their ambitions, confess their faults, seek encouragement, and often she must have felt the strangeness of her position when those of more maturity than she turned naturally to her. The experiences of this daily reception hour so carefully set aside would fill a good volume.

She was also at this time president of the Women's Exchange and Decorative Arts Society, and at the head of the women's work in her church. Thus the days were spent in the service of others. One full week each month was set aside for committee meetings. In between all these were little visits with her father at home or in his office, and her own home life with Elaine, her daughter.

Little time and thought were left for herself, but the fact that her individual happiness all this time was being sacrificed merely added greater devotion and zest to her work. In her address at the first annual meeting of the Young Women's Christian Association, she said that life could be lived in only one of two ways, for self or for others. The former, she said, brought discontent, impatience, restlessness. "But working for others brings holiness and from that comes happiness. "We must win our happiness before we wear it."

The truth of her words lay deep in her own experience. Though she spent seven long years winning her own happiness, the faith that she would one day surely possess it never wavered, and after seven years the eventful day was visible on the horizon of a new existence.

CHAPTER VI

THE CROWN

ON AUGUST 24, 1899, David Whitney was sixty-nine years of age. The understanding between him and his eldest daughter had deepened and ripened with the years, and no thought of separation clouded his enjoyment of her companionship.

He was nearing the evening of life and could have looked back, had introspection been his wont, to years of achievement and happiness. His interests had spread from the Northern Peninsula until they extended to the States of Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and Pennsylvania. His dream of navigation on the Great Lakes had also been realized, for he now owned a Lake fleet of many vessels.

He looked after the enormous details of his interests himself, yet he never resented intrusion upon his time, and he was never too busy for an interview with anyone, no matter how unimportant, nor to hear him through. Everyone in Detroit knew the saneness of Mr. Whitney's counsel and his reputation for integrity. Although outwardly stern and businesslike, he was very fond of children and his family knew well the tenderness that lay in his heart. His joy was all in them. For himself he avoided every sign of ostentation, and was so frugal in expenditure as to give no outward indication of his worldly success.

Occasionally this unpretentiousness led to amusing situations. One day, as he came out of his office building into a pouring rain, two dapper young men standing on the curb saw him turning up his coat collar to keep out the storm. One of them said: 'Let's give that poor old gentleman one of our umbrellas. Perhaps he can't afford to buy one.' 'Shut your mouth, you fool. Don't you know him?'

said the other. 'That's David Whitney. He could have an umbrella made of diamonds if he wanted it.'

Again there was his experience while buying pictures in Europe. Probably the most extravagant purchase he ever made for himself was in Munich when he was on a pleasure trip abroad. Here he discovered some veritable art treasures, paintings by famous artists. David Whitney loved paintings, but only the best. The price came to what some men would have considered a fortune. While he was at the bank arranging for the necessary money, the cashier asked him to wait. At last an elderly gentleman appeared.

'I am the president,' he said, and courteously invited Mr. Whitney into his office. 'I am an older man than you and I should like to give you a little advice. That is a huge sum of money. It is hard work to make such a fortune just to spend it in a day. Will your family suffer because of this?'

David Whitney thanked him for his interest, but said, in his quiet way, 'I think my income warrants it.'

On the day that her father was sixty-nine, Grace greeted him with a poem. The family circle was still complete, with the exception of her mother, who had died nearly twenty years before, and this birthday was an extremely happy one. Mr. Whitney's health was improving, but it was still far from good. Grace decided to put off telling him the plans for her future yet a little longer.

By the first of the next year, however, her father was so much better that Grace decided the time had come. For many days she had pondered the best way to tell him. Finally she wrote him a letter and gave it to his secretary, saying, 'Some day, when father feels particularly well, give him this letter and then telephone me at once.'

When the message came, she flew to her father's office, and found him with his head bent over the table.

'Father,' she said, 'we will read the letter together.'

Then lovingly and gently she explained that she had found her fiancé in Paris a man worthy of her affection. 'I am going to join my life with his, and the time set is approaching.'

Just at that moment General Russell A. Alger, a lifelong friend, came into the office.

'My daughter is going to leave us,' said Mr. Whitney.

When General Alger had heard the story, he took her by both hands and said, 'Grace, we all love you. It is America's loss and France's gain. God bless you!'

The man who was bringing this great change into Grace Whitney's life was John Jacob Hoff, son of Captain John Jacob Hoff, an army officer who had served under Abraham Lincoln, and who now lies buried in the Military Cemetery, Alexandria, Virginia. His mother, a beautiful and cultivated woman, who had received her education abroad, transmitted to her son all the charm and affability of her refinement. Mr. Hoff was born in New York and very early in life became an orphan. He was brought up like a son in the family of an uncle by marriage. At the age of twenty-two, he left America for France, where he associated himself with the Standard Oil Company. In time he rose to be a principal executive in the French organization, and his knowledge of languages, his large international interests, and diplomatic qualities made him a prominent American abroad. During the seven years that Grace Whitney had kept him waiting, she had tested his patience, his loyalty, his unselfishness, and found them not wanting. Now she was leaving her father, her country, her friends, and her many interests in the homeland, to make other contacts with corresponding possibilities.

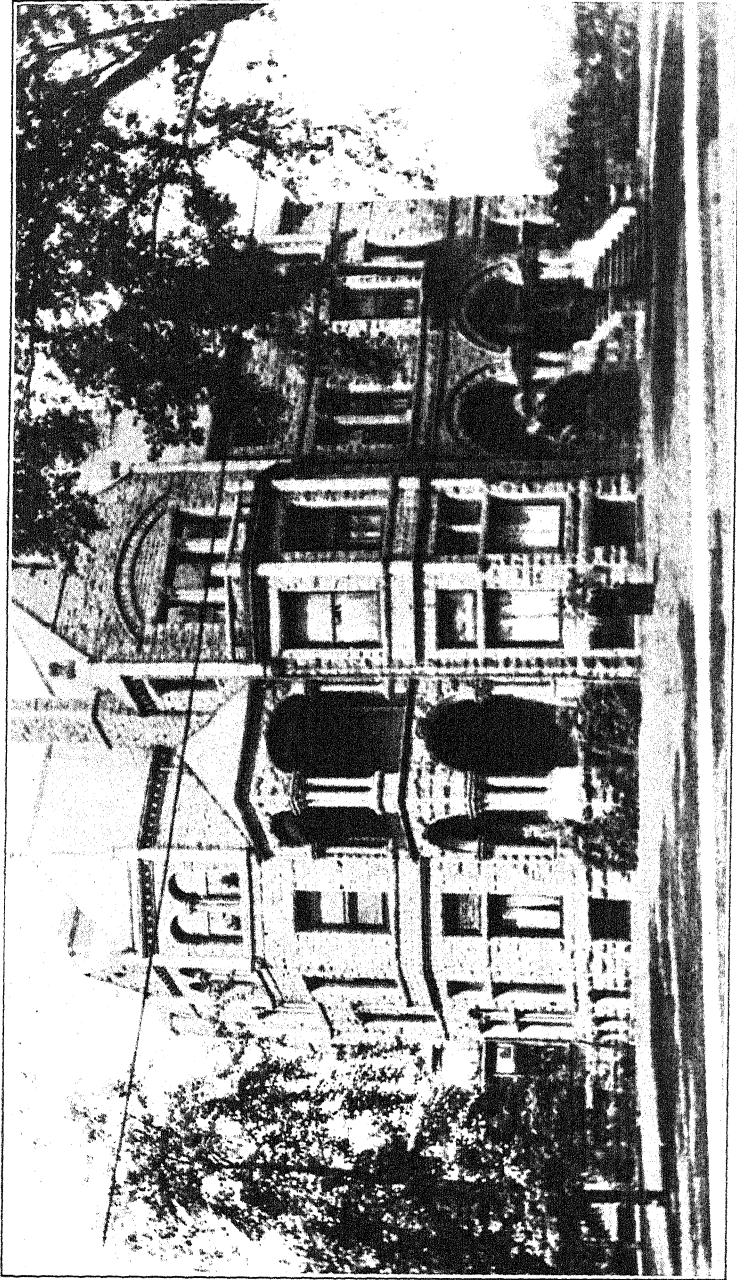
The date for their wedding was April 3, 1900. A few days before, Grace Whitney received a note warning her to remove her wedding presents to a place of safety. Explaining that she had done some member of his family a



JOHN JACOB HOFF
About 1900



GRACE WHITNEY
About 1905



DAVID WHITNEY RESIDENCE, WOODWARD AVENUE, DETROIT

kindness, the writer signed himself, '*One of the gang.*' Precautions were taken and an attempt made to rob the house was unsuccessful. Thus was Grace Whitney justified in saying, as she often did, that her friends came from all classes.

Grace Whitney was married at noon from her father's home, which was decorated with banks of white flowers against a background of palms. She made an impressive picture on a stairway as she descended into the great reception hall in her wedding gown of gray crêpe de Chine. Joining Mr. Hoff at the foot of the stairs, she took her place under the archway leading to the library. Beside them stood slender little Elaine in sheerest of muslins over green taffeta. It was symbolical that garlands of pink La France roses hung above and around them as the ministers, Dr. Howard Duffield, of New York City, and Dr. W. B. Jennings, now of Philadelphia, read the marriage service.

After luncheon, Mrs. Hoff went to her own home to prepare for the trip to New York. Here she found many friends and protégées gathered to bid her good-bye. Among them was a blind girl, who was inconsolable, yet the bravest of them all.

'There is something you can do for me while I am gone,' said Mrs. Hoff. 'I have been troubled about my poor little canary bird. Will you take him and care for him?'

Mamie smiled at last. As long as the bird lived, it sang to her of her friend across the water and she guarded it as a sacred trust.

The wedding day had dawned like a spring morning, but, by the time the bridal couple reached the station, it was snowing hard. Nevertheless, many girls from the Young Women's Christian Association and a host of friends gathered to see them off. The last words of her father, as he said good-bye to his new son-in-law, were:

'You have taken my dearest treasures. Care for them.'

Just before the train whirled them away into the storm, Mrs. Hoff leaned forward to catch a last glimpse of her father. Her heart was full of joy, but a pang crept in as she saw his familiar features wearing a smile for her benefit. She could not help wondering when she would see him again.

As the train sped along to New York, the bride thought of a talk she had once given her girls on Christian surrender. The steps toward this, she had said, were conviction, conversion, confession, and consecration. When they had taken these steps, then would the crown be added unto them.

How her life had proved this true! The talk with her friend at her father's gate and the vow that had followed; the costly sacrifice of seven years of happiness that she might remain with her father. And now the crown.

Because of her new happiness, would others have less place in her thought? That was to be the test of the coming years; but she was not afraid.

PART II

Who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?



CHAPTER I

THE FOSTER COUNTRY

ON THE tenth day of April, 1900, the steamer Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse left New York with the bridal couple aboard. The name of Kaiser Wilhelm had not yet resounded through the world, and no presentiment of tragedy clouded the happiness of that day. Bound on no ordinary honeymoon, but for their new home in France, Mr. and Mrs. Hoff were too busy to dream of tragedy and too engrossed in acting the part of a married couple of many years. To this illusion they felt that the presence of Mrs. Hoff's young daughter added weight. So far as they knew, not a soul was aware that they had been married only a week before. They were covered with surprise and confusion, therefore, when the orchestra greeted them as they went in for dinner by playing, 'I'll leave my happy home for you.' An old friend had recognized them and the secret was out.

Their arrival in Paris a few days later was attended with as high hopes as those of a youth and maiden starting life together. To Mr. Hoff, who could barely remember his father and mother, and who had spent most of his life away from his native land, marriage meant beginning life on a new and delightful basis; for since he had first known his bride, she had breathed about him an atmosphere of home.

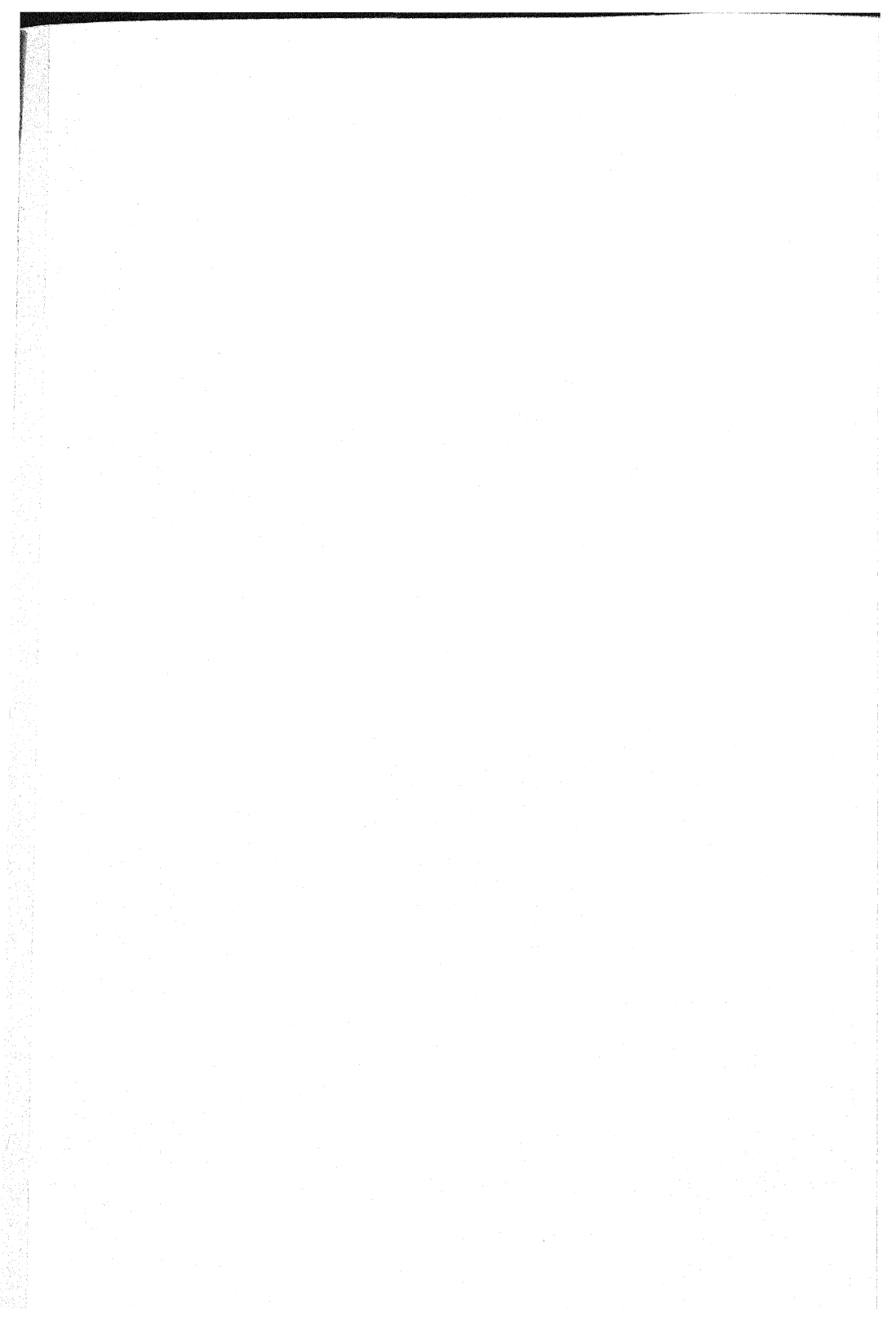
For Mrs. Hoff, too, life was beginning again. A new century in a new land! She had been in Paris before, and as a visitor had fallen under its spell. But now she was determined to become a part of the great city, to see into its depths, and to understand the people who made it what it was. 'La Fille de Rolande' had not yet been

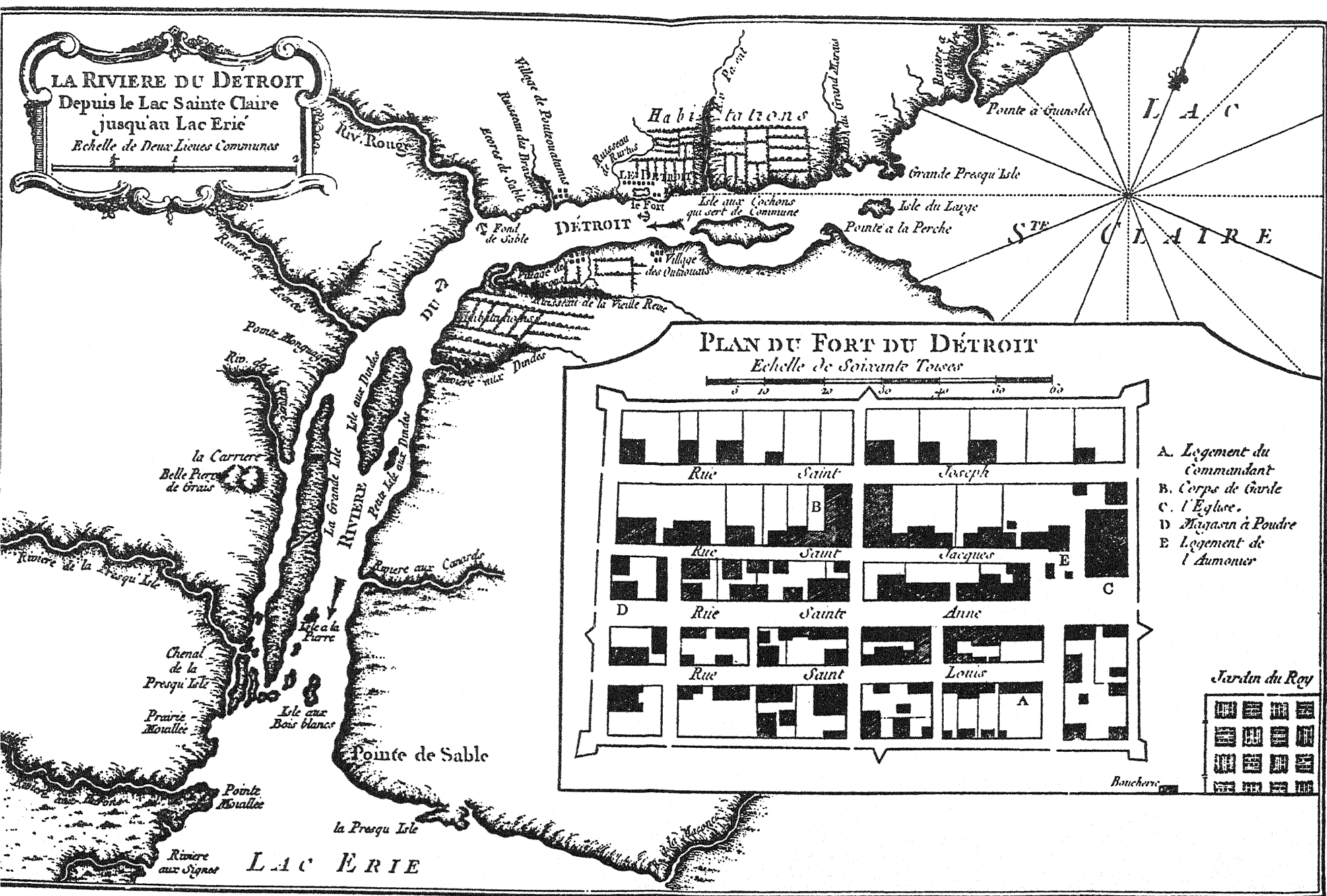
written, but Mrs. Hoff was already feeling the truth of de Borgnier's saying: 'Everyone has two countries, his own and France.'

In Mrs. Hoff's adoption of her second country, there lurked a bit of poetic justice. Two hundred years before, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, a young Frenchman had left Europe for America, to become first commander of French possessions on the new continent. Arriving at Montreal, Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac traveled by canoe for forty-nine days toward the farthest boundaries of New France. Here on the strait from which the city took its name, he founded the settlement which later became Detroit, one of the earliest French colonies in the New World. But the natural resources of that region were not destined for France, nor the wealth which it produced. Nevertheless, when Mrs. Hoff left Detroit for Paris, she carried a fraction of that wealth back to the original homeland.

The Paris of 1900 was in form much the same as it is today. The great boulevards, parks, and vistas laid out by Haussmann under Napoleon III had made it one of the most beautiful cities of the world. It was the social, diplomatic, and artistic center of Europe, as it had been for centuries, but industry had not yet laid its mark upon the city, and the ubiquitous motor car had not yet claimed the streets for its own.

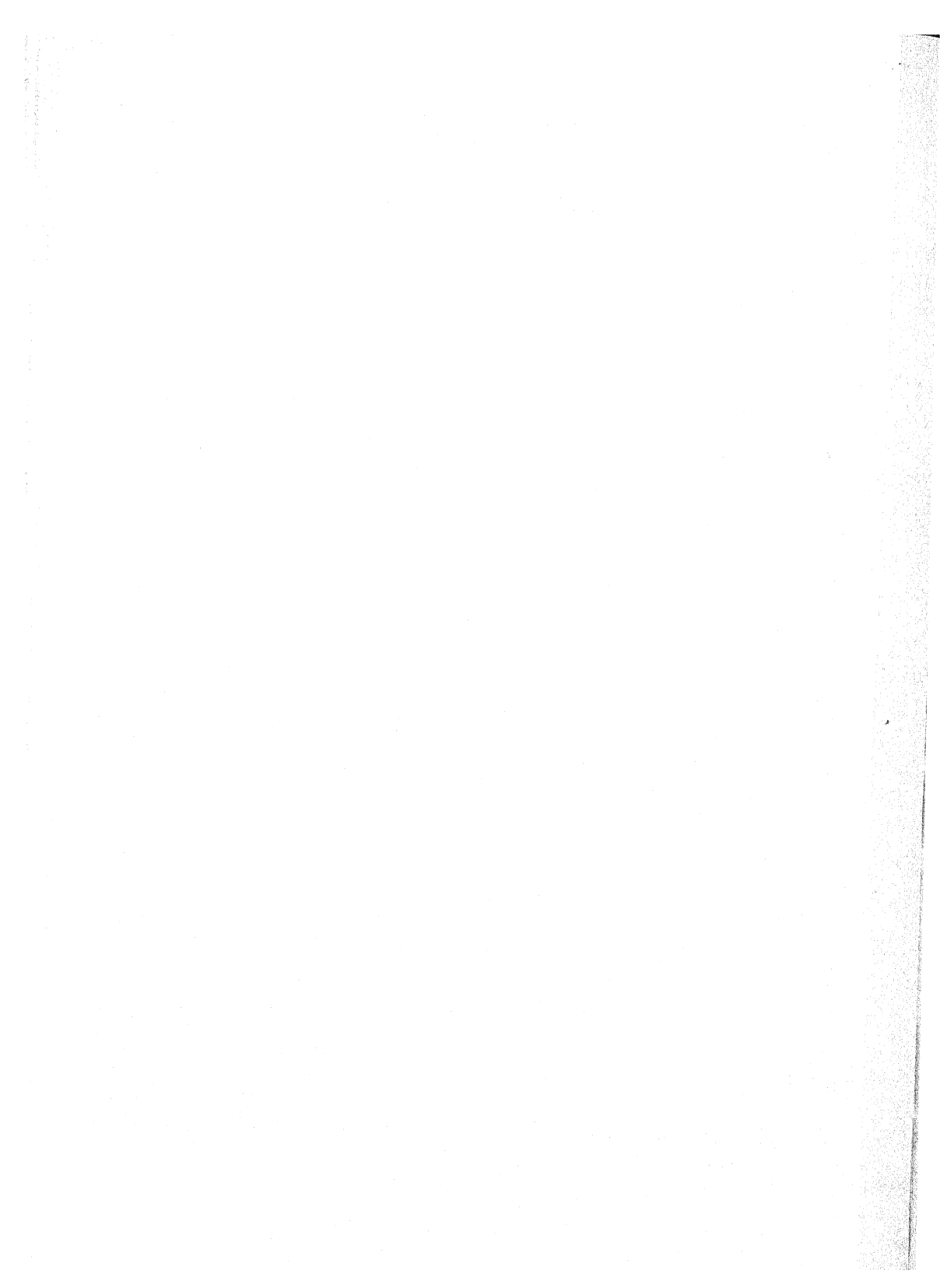
French women still lived their lives within the family. They rarely went out alone, and among the better classes even shopping was carried on with the utmost privacy. Outside of the schoolroom there were few public careers for women, although among the bourgeoisie a wife frequently entered into partnership with her husband. Nevertheless, in going to Paris Mrs. Hoff had no need to fear the social restrictions placed on her sex. American women even then were considered a law unto themselves,





THE DETROIT RIVER, FROM LAKE ST. CLAIR TO LAKE ERIE, A PLAN OF THE KING'S GARDEN, AND THE FORT OF DETROIT, CONTAINING SIXTY DWELLINGS, INCLUDING THE LODGING OF THE COMMANDER OF THE FORTIFIED TOWN, THE GUARDHOUSE, THE CHURCH, THE POWDER MAGAZINE, AND THE CHAPLAIN'S RESIDENCE

(From *Le Petit Atlas Maritime*, Volume one, number twelve, by Jacques Nicolas Bellin, Paris, about 1764)



and she, with her years of maturity, her established reputation, and her personal magnetism, could well afford to conduct herself almost as if she had been in Detroit.

The tempo of Parisian life still seems unhurried to the visiting American, but in those days it was even more so. This was the time of leisurely driving through the Bois de Boulogne, of strict social etiquette, and formalities without end. To Mrs. Hoff, fresh from the crowded days of Detroit, this leisure would have seemed strange and irksome if she had given herself up to it. The one who had educated her had spoken truly when she said that idleness could never be Grace Whitney's lot. She had no thought but to continue her work, although everyone had said, 'You will find things different over there.' In that cosmopolitan atmosphere, things of the spirit were less valued than in unsophisticated Detroit. Perhaps her efforts in the great foreign city would be lost like a drop of water falling into the ocean. But that faith which had upheld her before would not fail her now. The Lord would show her the way.

Her first Sunday in Paris she was noted among the congregation of the American Church on the rue de Berri. Dr. Edward G. Thurber was at that time the pastor. The following week, while walking on the Boulevard with her husband, she met Dr. Thurber, who immediately said: 'This is Mrs. Whitney-Hoff, is it not?' Upon her assent, he added: 'You are the very woman we have been looking for. Your reputation has traveled before you, and we want you to be secretary of our Ladies' Benevolent Association. Among the drifting elements that come to us, it finds much work to do. We want you because your life will be an example of the best that Paris holds.'

The newcomer did not ask for time to consider. That was not her way. She accepted at once and made an appointment to discuss further the plans.

This Ladies' Benevolent Association was much more important both as to size and to range of influence than corresponding organizations in churches at home. The garments made here were distributed to every station of the McAll Mission throughout France, and the weekly meetings formed a recognized *rendez-vous* for American women in Paris, often with distinguished speakers or excellent music. At a time when an American Women's Club had not been thought of, here was a place where newcomers could be sure of a welcome and of congenial associations. To all the friendly ministries of this organization Mrs. Hoff greatly contributed.

Thus, when she had been in Paris but a few days, she took a position which she held for fourteen years. Her call had come and without hesitation she answered it.

Much of her time during those first days was spent in establishing the home she and Mr. Hoff had dreamed of so long. They took a spacious apartment near the Etoile, and for weeks the talents of this instinctive home-maker were busy selecting, arranging, combining the materials of domestic life into a perfect whole.

In November her happy labors were interrupted by a summons from Detroit for Mrs. Hoff to return. Her father was dying. The long trip across the ocean — and how much longer it seemed than when she and Mr. Hoff had crossed it together — was taken in the certainty that her father could not live until she reached him.

A sad home-coming it was, laden with grief and care. The great fortune which her father had built fell to his heirs, and the responsibilities for which he had trained his eldest child had now to be assumed by her. As his last will did not include several of the public bequests which his children knew he wanted to make, they took counsel together and allotted a large part of the fortune to various charities. Among these was a gift of twenty-

five thousand dollars to be used as a building fund by the Detroit Young Women's Christian Association.

Mr. and Mrs. Hoff then returned to Paris, and Mrs. Hoff, longing to use this experience as a foundation for larger service, became absorbed in others as she had done in Detroit. She took up her work in the Ladies' Benevolent Association with renewed devotion. It ministered to all sorts of distress in the great capital and every field of service that it touched beckoned her to greater effort.

She once said, 'A society dominated by a purpose needs no secretary. It writes its own history.' But here was no cut-and-dried secretaryship. In her reports we see the same whole-souled loyalty, the same art of infusing into others the enthusiasm that distinguished her in America. The meetings, too, as she described them, seemed to take on something of her own warmth.

In her service for the American Church, through the Ladies' Benevolent Association, one of her first gifts was to supply Christmas dolls for the poor French children, and on Christmas Day these dolls, dressed by members of the Association, were placed into one hundred pairs of empty arms and brought ecstasy to a hundred little hearts. This work was carried on each year until the Great War, when other service was substituted for the French children.

On one occasion, in one of her reports, Mrs. Hoff described a scene where this same society carried Christmas cheer to three hundred women.

The hands that were held out to receive our gifts were marked by the scars of hard labor.... Within these walls they were participating in a little pleasure — so rare in their lives — listening to comforting words and receiving welcome gifts. ... I felt an unseen power lightening the burdens that bowed those weary shoulders, making it possible for these workers to face another year.

As always she spoke from her own experience. She herself had a genius for entering into the lives of others and realizing their needs, no matter how different they might be from her own. She had an abundance of everything and to share it with others was for her 'the bliss of heaven.'

Dr. Thurber's successor at the American Church on the rue de Berri, Dr. Chauncey W. Goodrich, whose two pastorates here covered twelve years, once related an incident characteristic of Mrs. Hoff. Through the church she had come in contact with a woman who had lost her husband and who, drifting alone in Paris, felt that she had no anchorage and nothing to live for. Mrs. Hoff made the woman her friend, bought a New Testament for her, and sat up until two o'clock in the morning marking passages for her comfort and guidance. In ways like this she was constantly sharing herself with others.

Although she gave herself unstintingly to the work of the Benevolent Association, Mrs. Hoff felt that a wider service should be hers which would bring her into closer relationship with the country she had chosen for her home. Early in her stay she began to prepare by studying the people about her and mastering their language. Each morning before rising she enlarged her French vocabulary by twenty words. She read French history and literature, and tried to observe everything about her with intelligence and tolerance. In these days she gradually built up a sympathetic understanding of France which was to serve her increasingly as the years went on.

CHAPTER II

RUE DE TURIN ET LA RIVE GAUCHE

IN AMERICA Mrs. Hoff's interests had been primarily with girls, though her life with its many activities had influenced women of all classes, the woman and girl of leisure as well as the wage-earner. But among the French, there were comparatively few employed girls away from home corresponding to the growing numbers in America. Until the War, French girls, like their mothers, were still guarded within the home or absorbed into the family industry. Many of them may have needed a friend, as her girls in Detroit had, but how was a stranger to find them out?

Yet she had not long to wait for a chance to renew the work which lay closest to her heart. Paris at that time held a special fascination for English girls. If their prospects were none too good at home or if their lives seemed dull and stodgy, they turned their eyes toward the gay capital. Paris, with its enticing flower carts, its street cafés, its red-cheeked gendarmes, seemed the height of romance. If they could only find work there — and it was not hard for an English girl to do so — life would be rosy again. While acting as governesses, they could learn French, and, if their fortunes declined, home was only a few hours across the Channel. For an American girl to be 'down on her luck' in Paris was not so simple a matter as for her English cousin, for home lay several thousand miles away.

Unfortunately, this beautiful city did not always prove a paradise for girls away from home. Agencies of one kind and another were springing up to help them, but without definite aim and organization. The World's Committee of the Young Women's Christian Association, with offices in

London, issued a list of addresses of the homes conducted by the local Associations all over the world and also of secretaries who might furnish aid where no such homes existed. There was, indeed, a secretary listed in Paris; but alone, without facilities or resources, she could do little more than realize the definition of a secretary given in the dictionary, 'One employed to write letters and the like.'

She was not prepared for what happened every summer when troops of American girls came to Paris. Bent on stretching their slender traveling funds as far as possible, or feeling that their French lacked the robust traits needed for daily use, many looked forward to staying at the Paris Young Women's Christian Association, not realizing that in foreign countries such an address of a corresponding secretary might not furnish any accommodations for travelers.

All too frequently the secretary was summoned to the door to find a girl or girls upon her doorstep, with baggage piled alongside, and the cab already dismissed. Whatever the number of travelers, or whatever the hour of their arrival, her abode did not admit of taking in guests. Her would-be visitors were no more distraught than she.

Therefore, when a group of English women living in Paris felt that a local Young Women's Christian Association should be organized, this secretary was prepared to welcome the suggestion with whole-hearted zeal. Among the sponsors of this plan was an officer of the World's Committee, Mrs. Herbert Tritton, who had heard of Mrs. Hoff's model work in America.

'She is the woman we need,' she told the Paris group, and as soon as possible they called on Mrs. Hoff to submit their proposal to her. Would she organize and be president of an Association in Paris that would befriend English and American girls?

She recognized the challenge. There was no hesitancy this time, no conflict of duty and desire as when the question had been put to her in Detroit. She was eager to communicate with the lonely, friendless girls in this city of her adoption. There was no questioning of the difficulties to be met, nor of her ability to perform the task. She accepted the charge gladly, knowing that the One who had guided her in everything would give her wisdom from day to day to meet her needs.

Thus, in 1904 did the British-American Young Women's Christian Association come into being, with Mrs. Hoff at its head. Its organization afforded another adventure for her pioneer soul, but it also called upon all her store of diplomacy and patience. Although the Association movement in England and America came from the same root, in the new country it had taken on a character quite different from that of the mother association.

In England the local units did a beneficent work among a membership largely composed of the employed classes. Movements which sprang up among women students were wholly separate from the Young Women's Christian Association and were considered on a different social level. In America, on the other hand, the movement encompassed every form of activity for girls, and included student organizations as a vital part of the whole. The relationship was so close, in fact, that members slipped easily from their home group into their college groups, and back again after graduation.

Integrating these two types of organizations, which represented widely different points of view, was not easy. A further difficulty arose from the fact that the British were more class conscious than the Americans. The existing homes for British girls in Paris had two tables in the dining-room — one for girls in the domestic and *gouvernante* class, and one for girls supporting themselves in

more privileged occupations. As Mrs. Hoff was incapable of seeing these distinctions, her plans included no such refinement. To her a girl was a girl. She once said, 'It is natural for me to put my arm around a girl.' And where she once put her arm or her hand, there went her heart to stay.

Still a third problem confronted her in the type of secretary available. Secretaries in England and thus far in Paris had been volunteers, who offered their services free of charge, devoting their leisure time to the work and looking on it as a charity. It did not at first occur to them that Mrs. Hoff needed for her type of organization dependable workers, giving trained service in exchange for a salary. When it became evident how much actual work there was to be done, there was no solution but to send for an American-trained secretary.

Mrs. Hoff naturally turned to the secretary whom she had found so capable and devoted in Detroit. Out of loyalty to its former president, the Detroit Association lent its beloved Esther Anderson to her. Miss Anderson was the first secretary the Paris group ever saw in action, a secretary such as is not described in any dictionary. Combining spiritual, executive, and social qualities of the highest type, she was the sort of whom Grace Dodge once said, when presiding at a national Young Women's Christian Association convention, 'When found she should be wrapped in cotton and exquisitely cared for.'

But Miss Anderson went to Paris to work, not to be cared for. She and Mrs. Hoff were old team-mates, and a remarkable pair they were. When Miss Anderson arrived in Paris, she found everything in readiness for her. At number 5 Rue de Turin, not far from the Gare Saint-Lazare, a self-contained house in the rear of a charming garden had been found. Ivy-covered walls surrounded the garden, where trees and circular paths invited repose.

Glass doors on the ground floor opened into the main room which was to serve for Sunday vesper services, Bible classes, receptions, committee meetings, and employment bureau. On the floors above were living quarters for girls who needed a permanent or temporary home.

In remodeling the building Mrs. Hoff had carried into effect her well-tested principles of comfort and beauty as well as serviceability. Indeed, one visitor remarked, 'You spoil these working girls. They do not need such a beautiful place.'

Mrs. Hoff smiled to herself, for she well knew that it was the unnecessary beauty, the unexpected handclasp that won people's hearts. She needed no further proof than to visit 5 Rue de Turin on a Sunday afternoon, as she often did, and see the bevy of girls who flocked there to enjoy its coziness and the friendly atmosphere created by Miss Anderson.

Following Miss Anderson came Dr. Louisa Holman Richardson whose constructive administration and devoted service were destined to continue for a decade during the formative years of Mrs. Hoff's early undertakings. In the spring of 1906, a call was extended to a secretary working in Los Angeles building up an educational department. Though this task was absorbing, she was far from regarding herself as a fixture anywhere. Dreaming of travel and in preparation for the opportunity that might come, she had acquired a good working knowledge of French. When the call was received at the national headquarters of the Young Women's Christian Association, a telegram was dispatched to Los Angeles, offering this secretary the post and giving her four days to make the decision and leave Los Angeles. The need was urgent, owing to the forthcoming World's Conference to be held in Paris.

In a fortnight the new secretary stood in the Gare Saint-Lazare. Until then Mrs. Hoff had been but a name



to her — the name of a woman whom she might or might not like, but whose help she would need as long as she was with the British-American Young Women's Christian Association.

When the actual Mrs. Hoff stood before her clasping her hand and warming her heart with a friendly smile of welcome, whatever apprehensions she had had were over. Whatever the exactions of her work in this strange city, here was a friend whom she could always look to for encouragement. A friend — yes, but the intuition which told her that did not hint that twenty-five years later she would write the story of this woman's life, attempting to put into words her own appreciation and that of the many hundreds who have called Mrs. Hoff blessed. The future, as always, was inscrutable.

This secretary arrived in Paris just before that memorable May first when the official separation of Church and State in France occurred. Just what was expected to happen on this day no one knew, but dire events were prophesied. A legal friend warned her to remain at the port of entry, but she had reached Paris and was already installed in a hotel as Mrs. Hoff's guest when the fateful day arrived. Paris residents had laid in a store of provisions, barred their doors and windows, and prepared as for a siege, and visitors were cautioned not to leave their hotels.

The World's Conference of the Young Women's Christian Association to be held in Paris was scheduled for May 16 to 21, 1906, and most of the delegates were *en route*. The head of one delegation cabled to see if it would be safe to proceed with her flock. But May first came and went in absolute quiet. The Champs Elysées, so it was said, was as quiet as a Scotch churchyard on a Sunday afternoon, and the only casualty reported was an accident.

When the Conference assembled, Mrs. Hoff gave the

address of welcome, and so impressed her auditors that she became a world figure in Association circles. The constitution of the World's Committee permitted votes to be cast only by members of local associations that belong to a national group. The French constitution was not drawn up to include an exotic group such as the British-American Association in Paris. Mrs. Hoff, therefore, was in the strange position of being unable to vote in the business sessions of the Conference. However, her influence was felt in other ways. She gave a reception for the delegates at her home on the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne (now Avenue Foch) and invited them to visit her country home, Château du Bréau. Here she entertained them in intimate groups at luncheon.

One is tempted to dwell at length on reminiscences over those years in Paris when the Association on the Rue de Turin was forging ahead, perfecting its methods of cooperation, and making contacts with fully a score of nations. In the course of her work the new secretary found herself looked upon as a kind of Pandora's box which could furnish anything from a milliner's address to a few hundred dollars for an art student who had just found a teacher who understood her, and needed to study one more year. And more than once it was necessary to mediate between *pensionnaires* who were fighting the American Revolution over again.

As the place became known, girls of all nationalities who were alone in Paris and needed help were sent there. The confidence with which these girls had left home and thrown themselves upon the mercy of a foreign city was touching. One little German girl found herself utterly helpless when no one met her at the station. Someone sent her to a German hotel, but it had no vacant room. She wandered about the streets until a bootblack let her spend the night in his stall. The next morning someone

took her to the home at 5 Rue de Turin, where she was sheltered until her friends could be found.

If the girls turned to their secretary as to a Pandora's box, they looked upon Mrs. Hoff as a magnificent but very approachable fairy-godmother. As one of them said, she came into the garden at number 5 Rue de Turin like a vision of loveliness, but when she put her arm around them, they forgot that she wore the clothes of a queen. She was only their friend, and they loved her.

In spite of the fact that the home on the Rue de Turin, and a later development, the lunch-room on the Rue Cambon, near the Madeleine, were designed for all English-speaking girls, often not an American was in residence during the summer. The reason was that those who stayed in Paris through the winter were almost invariably students, with activities centering on the Left Bank. For American girls or women to be regularly employed in Paris was rare, partly because working conditions abroad compared unfavorably with those at home and partly because English girls were in greater demand for tutors or governesses on account of their purer accent.

On more than one occasion someone expressed surprise to Mrs. Hoff that so few Americans were included in her work. Why did she not do something for the students? Accordingly, when the home on the Rue de Turin had been opened about two years, Mrs. Hoff decided to make a survey of the Latin Quarter.

For generations young men from all over the world had sought the intellectual advantages of Paris, and by the early nineteen-hundreds girls were beginning to follow their brothers' example. Paris beckoned, but often those who answered her call found discouragements awaiting them. Perhaps they studied with the wrong teachers or discovered that their talent was not so great as it had seemed at home. Perhaps their money gave out just as

the goal seemed within reach, or perhaps they were lonely or too tired to struggle with a foreign tongue. Often they sought something intangible that Paris was to give them, and could not find it.

Most of these students were on meager scholarships, or were piecing out their own insufficient funds as best they could. For living quarters little was available but ugly rooms, which were poorly heated, if at all, poorly lighted and altogether dispiriting. The situation was far different from that in the schools from which most of them had come, where the students lived in dormitories and ate in a common dining-hall. In spite of the fact that a simple French meal could be bought for a franc (twenty cents) or two, strange food and unwise economy made some of them ill. Even more succumbed to the penetrating damp of a Parisian winter. Sick and wretched, they sometimes lacked friends or even money enough to take them home.

Of all their needs, the problem of living was the most acute. Mrs. Hoff was not long in deciding to commence her work by opening a home for girl students on the Left Bank. The first step was to delegate her committee to canvass the neighborhood of the Sorbonne for a suitable house. Unable at first to locate an independent house, they were on the point of renting a large apartment when the proprietor learned that meetings with singing might be held on the premises and refused them a lease.

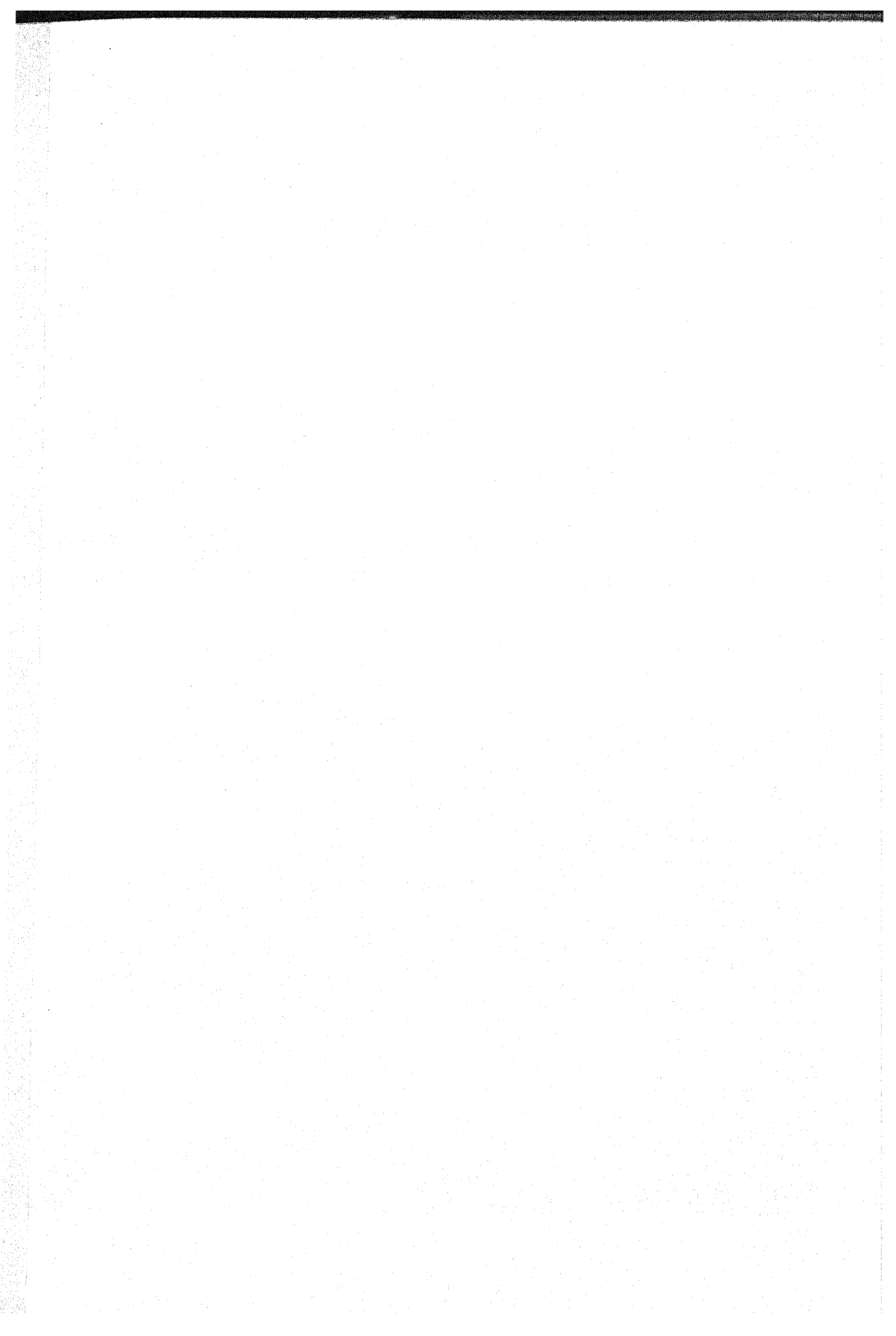
Again the search was taken up, and this time a fairly promising house was found around the corner from the Boulevard Saint-Michel. Although it was not so large as Mrs. Hoff desired and had no garden of its own, two lovely gardens adjoined the property. After much deliberation the committee decided it was the best they could do. Their decision came too late, however, for someone else had rented it in the meantime. This apparent misfortune

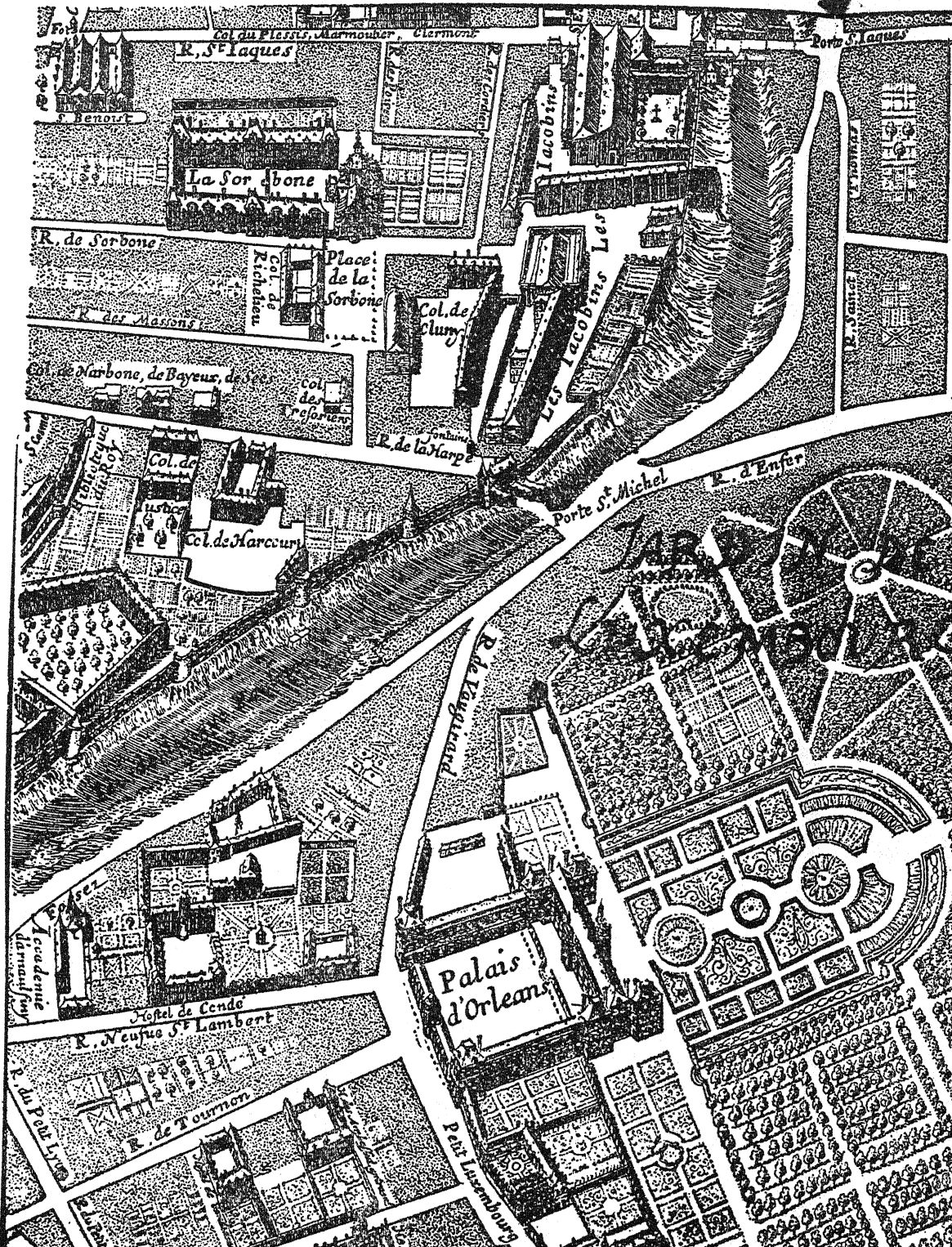
was a great blow to everyone but Mrs. Hoff. With her usual optimism she said, 'The Lord has something better in store for us.' An overconfident sentiment, thought those who had scoured the Latin Quarter until they were footsore, for it was hard for them to see where the Lord was hiding a full-sized house and garden.

Another building on the Boulevard Saint-Michel directly across from the Luxembourg Gardens had already caught their eye. It had been empty for several years, they were told, except for caretakers. When they tried to look at the house, the caretakers persistently refused to let them in, apparently having no wish to be disturbed from their comfortable quarters. Not until Mrs. Hoff's attorneys intervened did they gain admittance. What they found was more than satisfactory. The house was old, dating back to the seventeenth century, but it was roomy beyond their expectations. It also had a large courtyard in front and a delightful garden in the rear. Very early in its history the place had been a convent, and at another time, so the story went, it had been inhabited by the great Pascal.

Arrangements were finally made to lease the property and under Mrs. Hoff's capable hands the process of renovation began. Carpenters, masons, and plumbers worked for several months, as there was much to be done and the firm that had decorated Mrs. Hoff's own home did the same careful artistic work on this. The best that Paris had to offer was not too good for these girls whom she did not yet know, but whom she already loved in her thoughts.

One of the great assets of this property was the quaint old garden. In it stood a little building which Mrs. Hoff at once visualized as a tea-house, with two rooms on the first floor and a studio on the second. Of all the nooks and corners of that old property, this tea-house became





R. S^t Jacques

La Sorbonne

R. de Sorbonne

Place de la Sorbonne

Col. de Clugny

Les Jacobins

Les Jacobins Les

R. des Maisons

Col. de Marbone, de Bayeux, de

Col. de la Harpe

Col. de la Harpe

Col. de Marcour

Porte S^t Michel

R. d'Enfer

R. de la Harpe

Palais d'Orléans

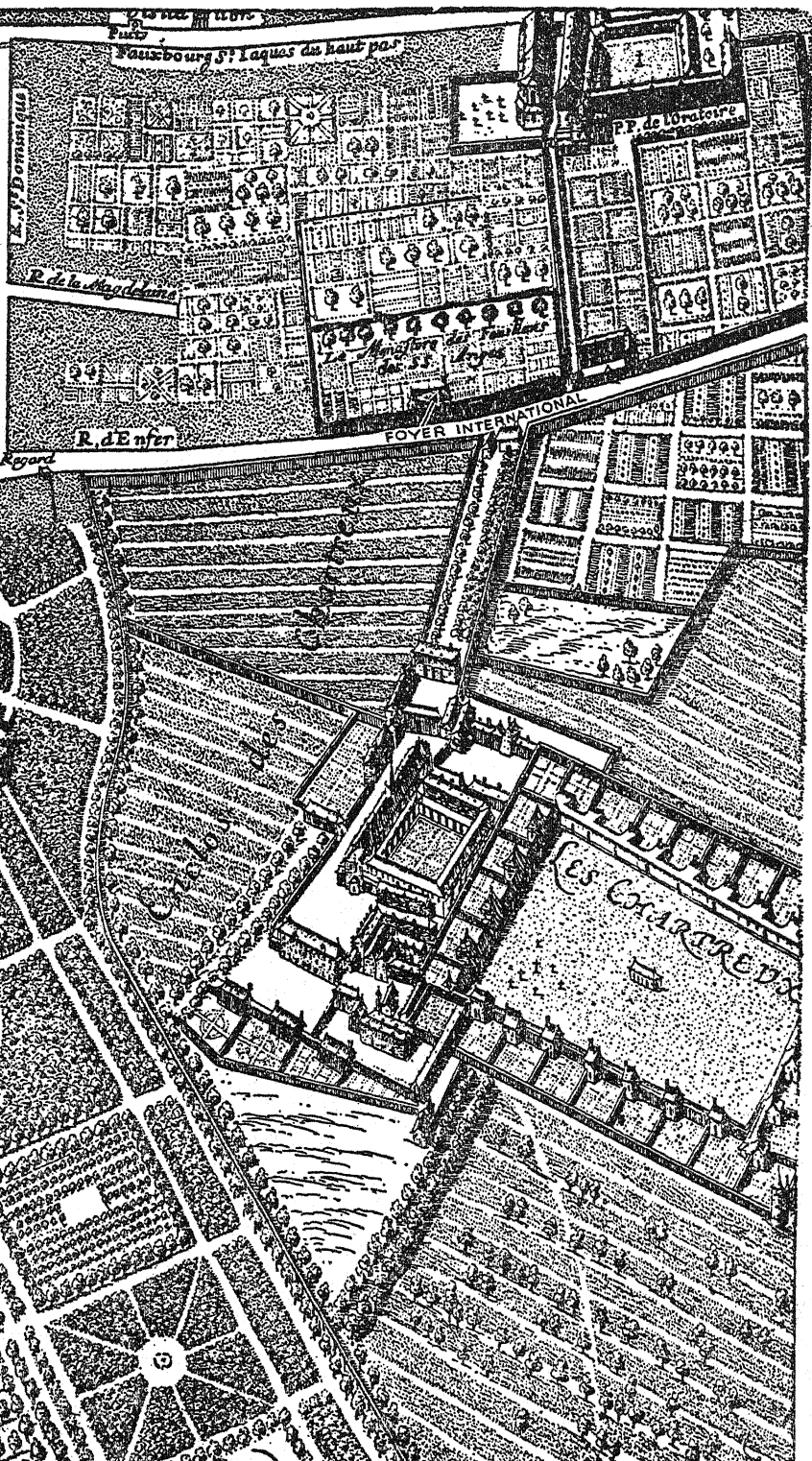
Hotel de Cende
R. Neufue S^t Lambert

R. de Tournon

Academie
Marsuifus

R. du Petit Lion

Paris
Luxembourg





the favorite spot, and its memory is still cherished by women who enjoyed it twenty-five years ago.

Mrs. Hoff had no intention of carrying on this work in the student quarter alone. She was far too constructive for that. There must be a permanent organization in whose hands she could place the administration of the building. Her philanthropy knew no arbitrary limits. With her, as she once wrote to a friend, the consciousness of any division of creed or nationality was lost sight of in the desire to serve God and humanity. In view of her sectarian upbringing, such breadth of tolerance is remarkable, but like her mother, she seemed to have acquired the essence of religion without the narrowness that often goes with it.

Much time and thought went into the perfecting of an all-inclusive organization such as Mrs. Hoff had in mind, and into the choice of a name broad enough to take in everyone whom it might wish to serve. 'The Student Union' was finally chosen as a name, and 93 Boulevard Saint-Michel became 'The Student Hostel.'

The date set for the opening of the Student Hostel was in December, 1906. As it drew near, considerable work remained undone, but Mrs. Hoff used her own influence with the workmen and saw to it that everything was ready when the day arrived.

As the Hostel auditorium was not large enough for all who wished to attend the opening, two meetings were held — one for members of the English-speaking colony and one for the newly formed Student Union. These were followed by a general reception at which the work was formally launched.

Although the Hostel was inspired by the need of Americans on the Left Bank, residence privileges were extended to both British and American students and its other activities were open to every nationality.

Among the facilities which the building offered were bathrooms available to non-residents, a small but growing library, and an infirmary with a graduate nurse in charge. This nurse was recommended by the American doctor chosen to visit the Hostel infirmary. She was by no means the perfunctory white-starched individual that the title might suggest. Dagmar Lous was a Dane by birth, of attractive personality and radiant character. After having trained in New York, she organized hospitals in Cuba and eventually, like the true cosmopolitan that she was, settled in Paris.

The Student Union embraced many more girls than could be housed in the Hostel. It divided itself into three groups — music students, art students, and regular university students, whose varied activities added a cultural and stimulating atmosphere to the house.

The International Music Union, as it was called, gave several concerts each year in the auditorium. Once a month those wishing to take part appeared before a committee who selected the artists for each programme. These musical evenings served the purpose of bringing music students before a small but discriminating public and furnishing each performer an honorarium.

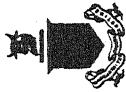
In addition to this they had the privilege of hearing the greatest musical artists of the world in the Hostel auditorium, such artists as Massenet, Madame Chaminade, Pugno, Harold Bauer, Georges Enesco, Madame Litvinne, and others equally eminent, who gave performances of their own compositions.

The Art Union held two exhibits a year. In the autumn *al fresco* sketches made during the summer were shown in the garden studio. A jury of French and American artists awarded a prize of five hundred francs (then equal to one hundred dollars) for the best sketch, which then became the property of the Hostel. In the spring a larger



*à ma chère Madame Hoff
Bien affectueusement
C. Chaminade*

MADAME CHAMINADE



RECITAL — M^{rs} MISCHA ELMAN



- I -

Introduction et Rondeau Capriccioso. . . ST-SAENS

- II -

a. Nocturne CHOPIN-WILHELMY
b. Valse. TCHAIKOWSKY

- III -

a. Humoreske DVOŘAK
b. Valse Cheke DRIGO

- IV -

Souvenir de Moscou. WIENIAWSKI



Vendredi, 1^{er} Mai 1908.

RECITAL — M^{rs} JAN KUBELIK

ACCOMPAGNÉ PAR M. SCHWAB



- I -

a. Humoreske. DVOŘAK

b. Scène de la Czarda. HUMAY

- II -

a. Havamba SAINT-SAENS

b. Carnaval Russe WIENIAWSKI



Vendredi, 7 Mai 1909.

PROGRAMME

UNE HEURE DE MUSIQUE



Oeuvres de M. Massenet



1. 1^{er} Mouvement du Concerto
Madame REY et L'Amateur
2. Amours bénis
*Mélodie chantée par M^{me} Minnie TRACEY
avec accompagnement de violoncelle
par M^r CASALS*

3. Mélo dies
*chantée par M^r Lucien FUGÈRE
de l'Opéra-Comique*

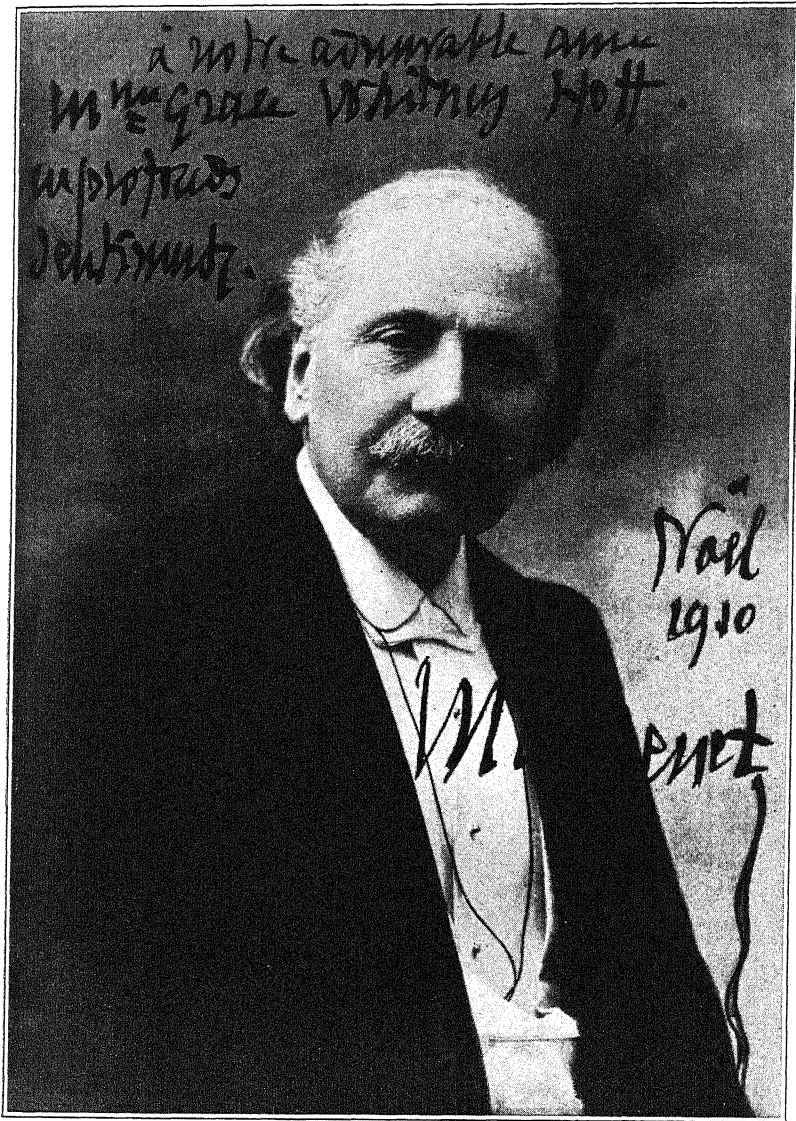
4. Air d'Hérodiade
chanté par M^{me} Minnie TRACEY

5. Fantaisie pour Violoncelle
exécutée par M^r CASALS

6. Si les fleurs avaient des yeux
a. Noël païen
b. Noël païen
c. Avril est amoureux
d. Ouvre tes yeux bleus
*Mélo dies chantées par
M^{me} Lucy ARBELL, de l'Opéra*

7. Oïseau des Bois
*Duo chanté par M^{me} Minnie TRACEY
et M^{me} Lucy ARBELL.*

M^{rs} MASSENET au piano.



MASSENET

Chère Madame, je suis si ma
 première pensée fait pour vous remercia de votre
 accueil exquis, la parole, adorable !

Merci à vous, merci à vos Hoff
 en très fervent
 à respectueux salutations

M. Massenet.

*272 M. Hoff, 100 Rue
 de Valenciennes.*

EXPRESS
 M. D'après la
 Règle
 Le transport de lettres est l'apanage de l'Administration

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
 1913

ENVELOPPE PNEUMATIQUE

M^{me} Hoff

64 avenue des Près de Biaclos

LA REMISE EST GRATUITE

Voir au verso.

Famille

Ma joie est exécrable !
 D'abord votre pensée - vos
 "astuces" vos ...

A cet Hubert Hubert !!!
 j'en suis sûr la lettre du 27 III - - Hubert
 est exquis ! ... vos très remuantes
 avec affluence ! M. Massenet

FACSIMILE OF LETTER FROM MASSENET

exhibit was held from the finished products of the winter's work in Paris. Here the prize was twenty-five hundred francs and the winning piece was sent to America. When it became known that such work as Elizabeth Nourse's 'A Mother with Two Children' and Jeanne Poupelet's bronze statue, 'Femme à sa Toilette,' were being sent over from France, applications from museums and art-lovers began to come in for the annual prize.

The International Collegiate Union had the advantage of hearing regular lectures in the Hostel auditorium given by the best exponents of science, art, and literature.

In all these activities Mrs. Hoff was the directing force and was materially responsible for their success. But not content to build up a smooth-running organization of loyal workers, to see the students well housed and protected, she followed the life of each student with genuine interest. These girls always felt free to go to her with their needs, and, when there was no opportunity at the Hostel, she made an appointment for them to see her in her own home.

Annually Mr. and Mrs. Hoff entertained the students at their Château du Bréau. Memorable days were these, for who could forget the historic setting, the bounteous tea-table, and the parting souvenirs!

For the welfare and enjoyment of her student friends, Mrs. Hoff seemed to have forgotten nothing. Indeed, one wonders how she gained her insight into the needs of those whose circumstances were so different from her own. One example of her thoughtfulness has been remembered by several of the Student Union with special gratitude. Realizing that, where girls had barely enough to cover their expenses, emergencies sometimes arose when money was needed desperately and on short notice, she entrusted a fund to one of the Hostel secretaries, which could be drawn upon at any time at the worker's own discretion.

As the Student Hostel became known, it was called upon to aid students who had reached Paris without addresses or proper funds, to give advice and information, and to perform many other services.

At the time of the flood in Paris in 1910, an official request from Washington to locate a missing American girl was referred to the Hostel. Through the trained nurse's register, it was found that she had made use of the facilities there, and, although she had moved three times since, it was possible to trace her.

The number of students who could live at the Hostel was limited, but its activities among non-residents, sixteen hundred in number, continued to expand for eight years, as long as foreign students flocked to Paris. Then came the War.

CHAPTER III

CASTLES

DURING Mrs. Hoff's early years in Paris, when her work with various other organizations as well as at 5 Rue de Turin was beginning to make constantly increasing demands upon her time and energy, she as well as Mr. Hoff frequently felt the desire for a country residence. Both Mr. and Mrs. Hoff are lovers of the country, and, though their home in Paris was beautiful, it could not take the place of a quiet retreat away from the busy and bustling life of a large city. Furthermore, Mrs. Hoff wished to know France and the French as completely as possible, and has often remarked that France — the real France — is to be found, not in the large cities, but in the rural districts.

Hence a château was sought. One requirement was that it should be fairly near to Paris. For despite her desire for occasional periods of relaxation from her various activities, Mrs. Hoff did not wish to sever all means of communication. In 1905, Mr. and Mrs. Hoff found the Château du Bréau and immediately came under the spell of its charm. Its romantic past, its proximity to Paris, above all its country surroundings of greenness, freshness, and light, promising peace of mind and tranquillity, decided them. They leased the château and its estate from 1905 until 1921, when they purchased it.

Château du Bréau, with its towers and walls mellowed by time, its moat and subterranean passages, lies but forty miles from Paris. Located in the Département of the Seine et Oise, it is not far from the beautiful cathedral town of Chartres. Fact and fancy have been woven about this old feudal pile by past generations until its history resembles that of an old and rich tapestry. Originally

the Romans occupied this part of France. Here Roman pottery, tiles, and specimens of money bearing the effigies of the Emperors Hadrian and Constantine have been found, sometimes within the grounds of Le Bréau.

The château itself dates from two different periods. The foundations are obviously much older than the rest of the structure, and tradition has it that the original castle was built during the ninth century, in the time of Charlemagne. Whatever edifice existed in those days may have been destroyed later in the same century by hordes of Normans who invaded the districts of the Seine and of the Loire. Sometime during the succeeding centuries, the present château was constructed upon the foundations of the earlier one. In the archives a document still exists in which it is recorded that Jocelin ceded the estate to the monks of Vaux de Cernay in 1168. During the first half of the sixteenth century, it is known that the château was owned by a Baron François de Hébert, for in one of the towers encrusted in the wall is the tombstone of his wife, Catherine Courtin, containing the following inscription:

Ci-gît noble demoiselle Catherine Courtin en son vivant femme de feu noble homme François de Hébert, en son vivant Baron du Bréau, laquelle trépassa en Septembre 1544. Priez pour son âme.

Here lies the noble lady, Catherine Courtin, in her lifetime wife of the late nobleman, François de Hébert, during his life Baron of Le Bréau. She passed away in September 1544. Pray for her soul.

During the religious wars of the late sixteenth century, the Duc de Guise occupied the château. Le Bréau saw stormy times during those years; its moat, now long since drained, probably served its owners well as a means of defense, and the stones of its paved courtyard rang to the

sound of martial feet and the clash of arms. Subterranean passages linking the château with neighboring towns still exist. These were devised as a means of escape for the occupants and defenders of the château should the battle go against them. During these years also, fortified gates, still standing, were constructed at the ends of four main avenues leading from the château to the town of Ablis, where the owner of Le Bréau had taken refuge. The Duc de Guise, during this occupancy, used Le Bréau as a distributing center for horses at the time of the wars, quartering as many as six hundred at a time in the grand stables, a part of which are to be seen today.

After the Edict of Nantes, issued in 1598, there was a temporary cessation of the religious wars between the Huguenots and the Catholics, and Le Bréau saw more peaceful times. During these years King Henry IV of Navarre is said to have used the place for hunting and recreation; a large *colombier*, always an indication of a royal seat, capable of housing two thousand carrier pigeons, still stands in a state of perfect preservation and substantiates this statement. According to another tradition, it was this same Henry IV who gave Le Bréau its full name: *Le Bréau sans Nappe*. In the forest at some distance from the château stands an old stone table beautifully situated at the intersection of several roadways. Upon the occasion of a certain hunting party, the King, desiring to eat lunch in the open, is said to have indicated the stone table and remarked: 'We will lunch here today *sans nappe*' (without a tablecloth).

Another explanation of the title exists, however. In a manuscript, still extant, entitled 'Fiefs du Roi,' it is recorded that a certain Robert Sannape acquired Le Bréau Sannape in 1326. Hence the modern term 'Sans Nappe' may have originated from a family name in the fourteenth century.

Throughout later times, from the sixteenth century onward, Château du Bréau has been occupied. In 1643, Antoine de Sillans, Marquis de Creully, was the Seigneur du Bréau. In 1725 the estate came into the possession of the Comtes de Saint-Mesme. Forty years later, it was owned by Charles Jules Rohan, Prince de Rochefort, and in 1786 it passed into the hands of Louis Henri René de la Barre and the Marquis d'Harbouville. During the French Revolution, at the close of the century, the château suffered some damage in common with all the great houses of the time. By 1810, however, the château was restored, and the estate once more occupied, this time by Monsieur Rivière de Lille. In 1815, Madame la Baronne d'Hervey, the widow of General Troussel, who was killed in Russia, bought Le Bréau. Later it came into the possession of her son, the Marquis Léon d'Hervey, a brilliant scholar and linguist, who was Professor of the Chinese Language and Literature at the Collège de France until his death in 1891. The estate remained with the d'Hervey family, from whom Mr. and Mrs. Hoff leased it in 1905, until 1921 when they purchased it.

It is interesting to note that Le Bréau has sheltered warriors, nobles, scholars, and at least one monarch, and that it has finally come to be the possession of an American woman who also numbers feudal knights among her ancestors.

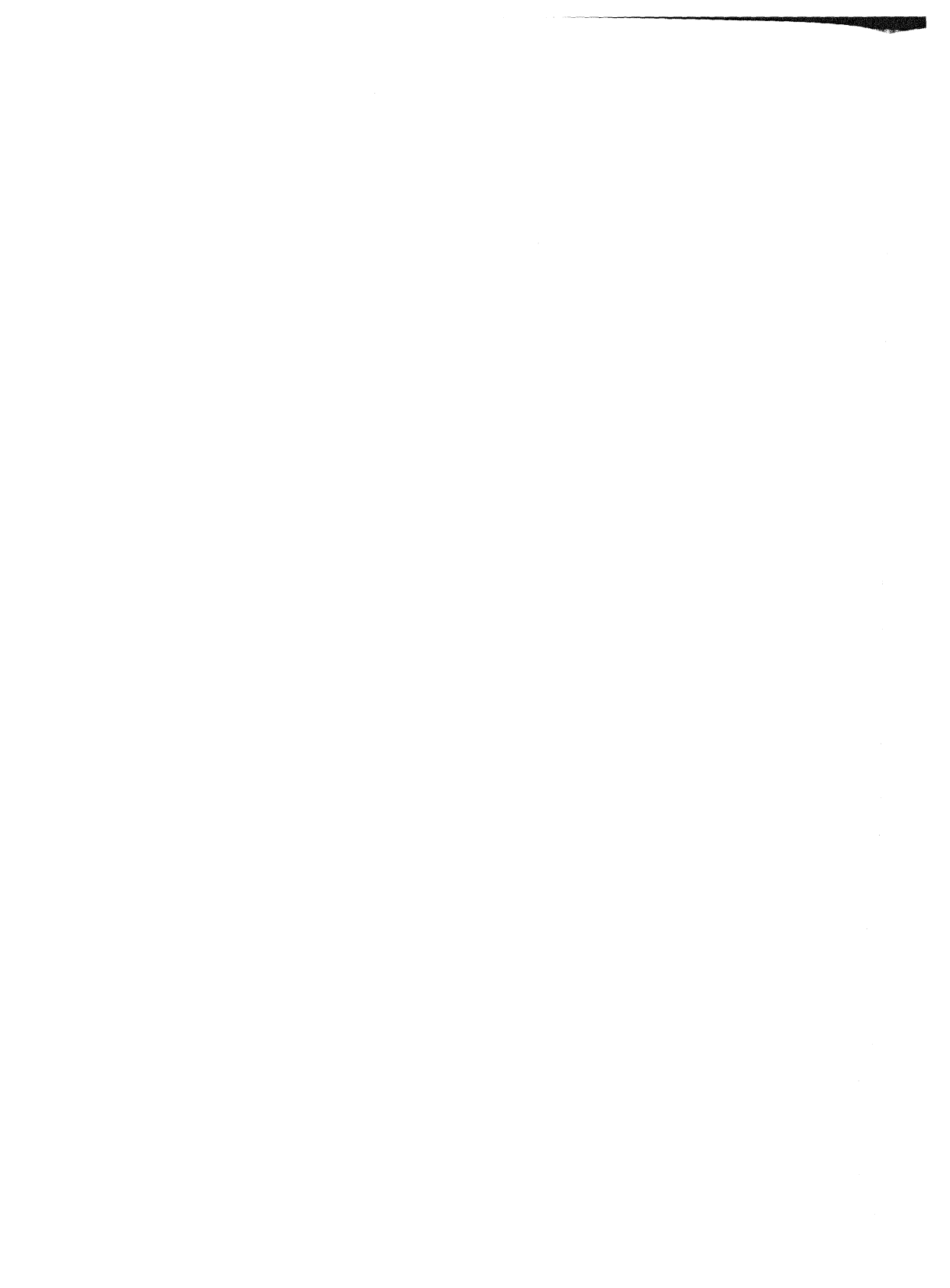
From any point of approach the château appears as a surprise, for the high walls and the tops of the forest trees effectively conceal it from the passer-by. Inside the gates, where now there is no portcullis, a roomy round stone building is to be observed, its conical top finished with a cupola, pierced with small entrances — the ancient *colombier*. Straight ahead is the château itself, a massive structure of dark brick with ivy-covered walls.

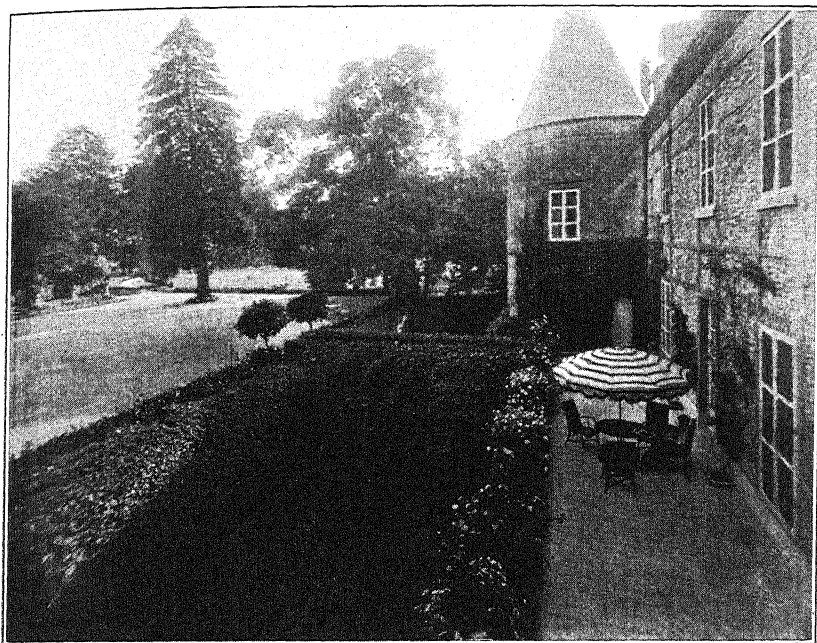


Mrs. Hoff at window

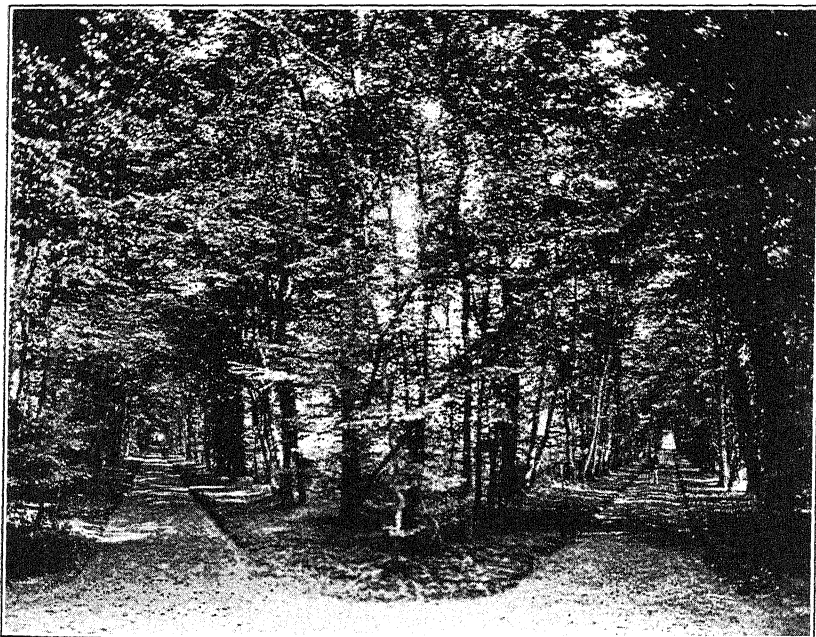


Stone group in the forest
CHATEAU DU BREAU

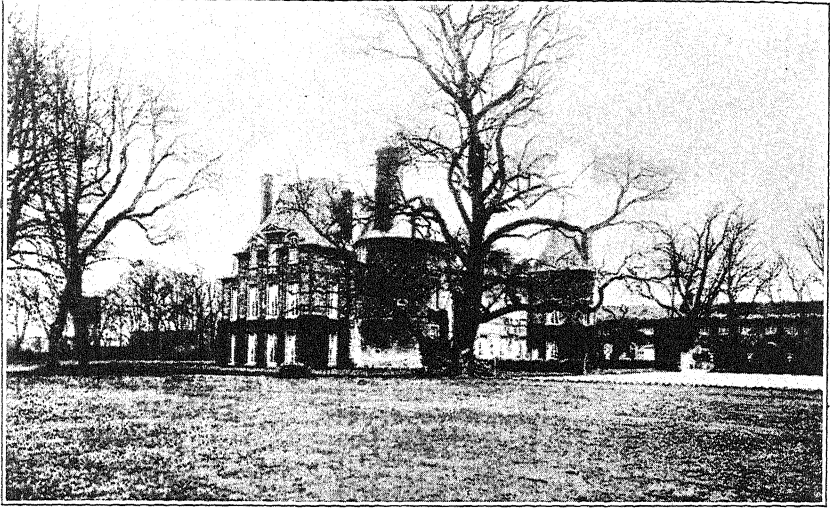




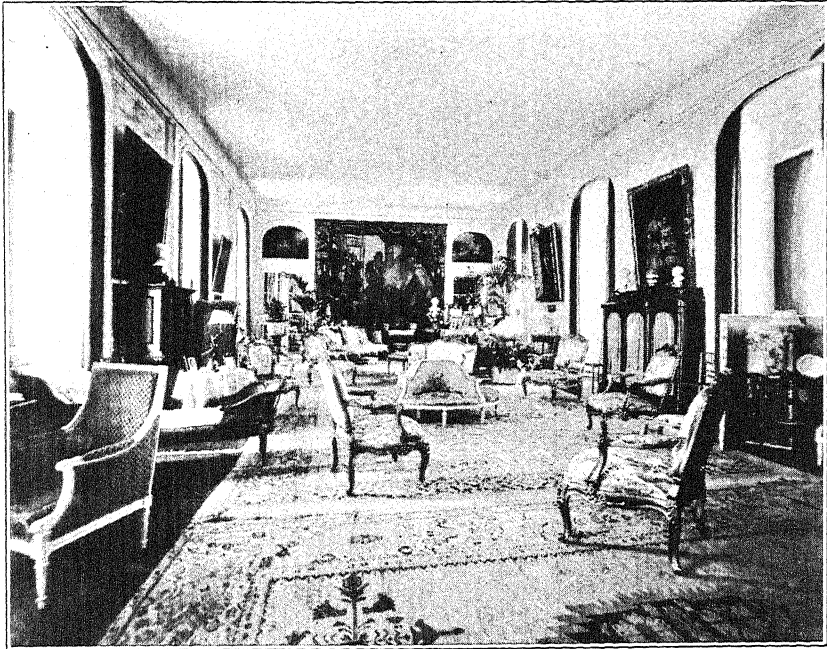
CHATEAU DU BREAU, SHOWING MOAT
Home of Mr. and Mrs. Hoff, forty miles from Paris



THE FOREST, CHATEAU DU BREAU, PAR ABLIS, SEINE ET OISE, FRANCE



CHATEAU DU BREAU



SALON, CHATEAU DU BREAU

Its distinctive features are two round towers and a moat, now dry, over which there is a bridge. On all sides are glimpses of urns of flowers, statuary half-hidden in the shrubbery, tidy borders of box and flowering plants; to the south is the forest where pheasants are bred for the autumn 'shoot.' At the right of the château closely clipped hedges border the pathway to the kitchen-garden. The grounds surrounding Le Bréau are said to have been laid out by Le Nôtre, the Royal Gardener of Louis XIV, and the creator of the landscape architecture at Versailles and Chantilly. Beautiful long vistas and perspective effects distinguish the grounds at Le Bréau in the characteristic manner of the celebrated landscape designer. Here where the pheasants nest and the wild anemone flowers and ferns grow undisturbed, the long arches of the trees and the soft damp stillness bring a feeling of stability and peace to those accustomed to the restless beat of city life.

But the interior of the château also has its allurements. Here are rooms, large, high-ceilinged, richly suggestive of the age, the romantic history, of the structure. There is an all-pervading atmosphere of which the visitor is immediately conscious. Yet the old château is entirely livable, homelike, with no restraints imposed by old-time traditions. Everything has been beautifully adapted to the needs of a modern American family. Changes are constantly being made in the grounds and buildings, but every consideration is shown for the feeling of the periods that are evident in architecture and landscape.

Since 1905, when Mr. and Mrs. Hoff first leased Le Bréau, hosts of guests, both American and French, have been entertained within its walls and upon its grounds. Each year in November and December there is the weekly shoot. Mr. Hoff, an ardent sportsman, breeds pheasants in the forest at Le Bréau. This work is under the supervision of a *garde-chasse*, whose duties are to care

for the birds during the breeding season, to patrol the woods daily to note their growth and numbers, and to direct the actual shoots in the fall. During the nesting season, no one is allowed in the forest, for fear of disturbing the mother birds, save Mr. Hoff and the *garde-chasse*. Later in the summer when the birds are grown, the sound of their drumming is frequently heard, and they often startle one in the woods by the loud whirring of their wings as they take flight.

In September the shooting season opens. Friends of Mr. Hoff arrive at Le Bréau in the morning, when a hunting breakfast is served. Soon after the shoot begins. The 'guns' break up into small groups and ensconce themselves in various artificial coverts, which are camouflaged with evergreen boughs. For three months hare and partridge furnish the sport, and in December, the pheasants. A group of 'beaters' under the direction of the *garde-chasse* then beats the pheasants from cover, driving them before the 'guns.' At the conclusion of the day's sport, all the game is collected and brought to the hunting lodge, where it is placed upon the traditional *tableau*. These are picturesque days for Le Bréau, when the presence of the sportsmen, the noise of the guns, the cries of the beaters, lend an air of high holiday to the estate. After a dinner served at the shooting-lodge near the edge of the forest, the *tableau* is apportioned and the sportsmen with their spoils motor back to Paris.

But sportsmen are at Le Bréau during only a few weeks of each year. At other times guests are equally numerous. Those who come are invariably curious concerning the château and its past. They carry away many and varied impressions, of the vistas of the forest, the healing peace of nature that pervades its walks and hidden nooks, the delicately wrought iron balustrade in

the entrance hall, the inviting luncheon and tea-table, the worn inscription above the grave of Catherine Courtin. Many a guest, weary of the rush and hurry of Paris, has spent a quiet week-end at Le Bréau, reveling in the comfort, the mellow atmosphere, and the beauty of the old château, to return to Paris refreshed and rested.

In 1909, Mr. and Mrs. Hoff acquired another country residence, Château de Peyrieu. Some years before, they had been entertained at Peyrieu at a Christmas celebration and had been delighted by its Gothic charm. At this time, however, theirs had been an impersonal enthusiasm, as there seemed to be no possibility of the château's ever being for sale. Yet, a few years later, Mrs. Hoff was called to the telephone one evening to be informed by an excited friend that Peyrieu was for sale. Arrangements for the transfer of the property were then consummated over the telephone.

It must be remembered that at this time Mr. and Mrs. Hoff had not purchased Le Bréau, but had only leased it; hence Peyrieu was really their first château. It speaks much for the charm of Peyrieu when they were so ready to buy it in view of the fact that they already regarded Le Bréau in the light of a fixed abode.

Peyrieu, like Le Bréau, is rich in historic and romantic associations. Here again traces of Roman occupation have been found. Remains of Roman burial grounds exist within the borders of the estate, and a very old stone bridge crossing the Gland River in one part of the grounds is attributed to Roman builders of the third century. These evidences of the earlier civilization are by no means astonishing, for the waters of what is now the neighboring town of Aix-les-Bains were known to the Romans, who often came there as long ago as the third and fourth centuries.

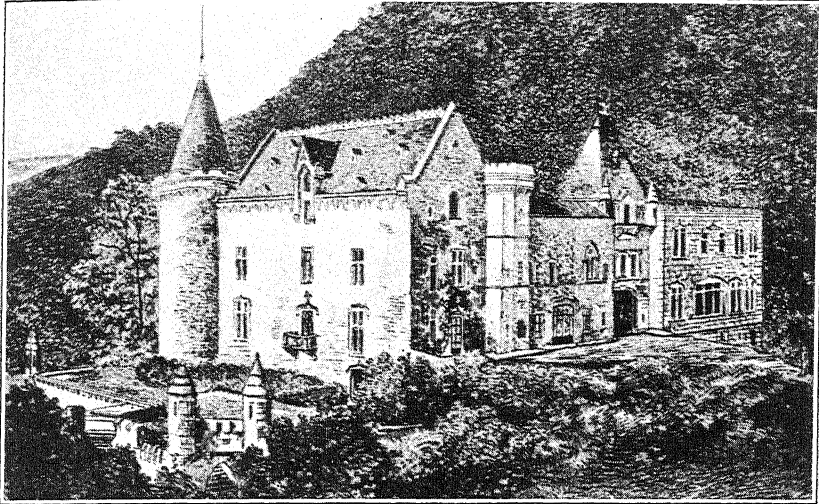
Peyrieu is first mentioned in the records of a neighbor-

ing bishopric in 1100, and was a part of the endowments of the diocese. In 1107 this grant was confirmed by Pope Pascal II, and again in 1125 by Pope Honorius II.

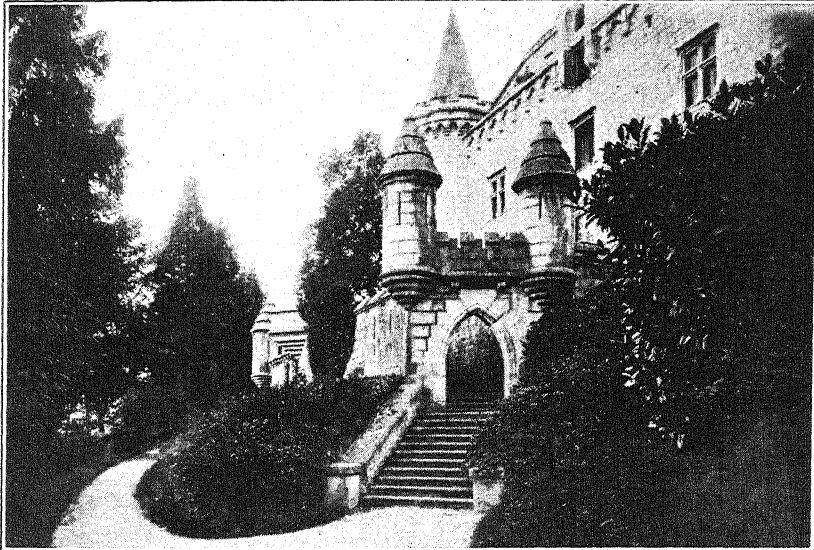
In the fourteenth century a château existed upon a near-by mountain peak, known as Château de Tavolay. It commanded the Rhone Valley and served as a citadel for Château de Peyrieu. Today only the ruins remain. The present Château de Peyrieu was first built in the fifteenth century and was owned by the powerful Dukes of Savoy. In 1446, Duc Louis de Savoie transferred the manor of Peyrieu to Pierre de la Touvière, one of whose descendants, Claude de la Touvière, in 1557 bequeathed it to his wife, Claire de Chabeu, on condition that she would transfer it only to a knight who would take the arms of Touvière. François de Groslée, lord of Montellier, was made her heir, and his granddaughter married Pierre de Montfalcon, whose descendants held Peyrieu until 1789. In 1880, it was restored, the east façade and the Great Tower being portions of the old château, while the rest was constructed anew. From this union of the old and new has grown the modern château.

The castle is beautifully situated upon the side of Mount Chatelard, about three hundred miles distant from Paris, and overlooks the wide valley of the Rhone, through which the river, a silver ribbon, winds across fertile fields. To the southeast in the distance can be seen the outline of snow-capped mountains, bespeaking the nearness of the great Alpine range and the Swiss border. Hannibal's Pass is not far away, and along the Rhone runs the old Paris-Italy highroad built by Napoleon. On a near-by rocky promontory, above the Rhone, stands the historic fortress of Pierre Châtel.

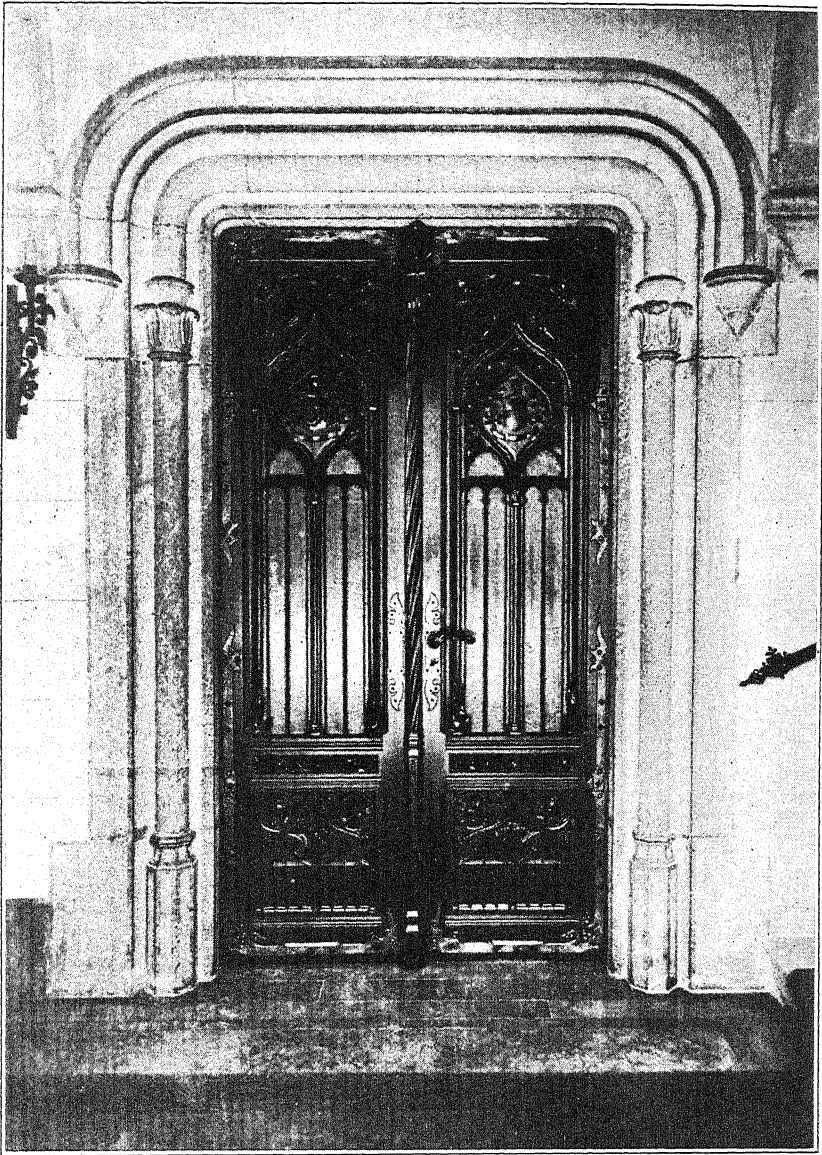
The château and its grounds are justly esteemed for their beauty. The former, lodged on the mountain-side, is protected from the north winds and at the same time is



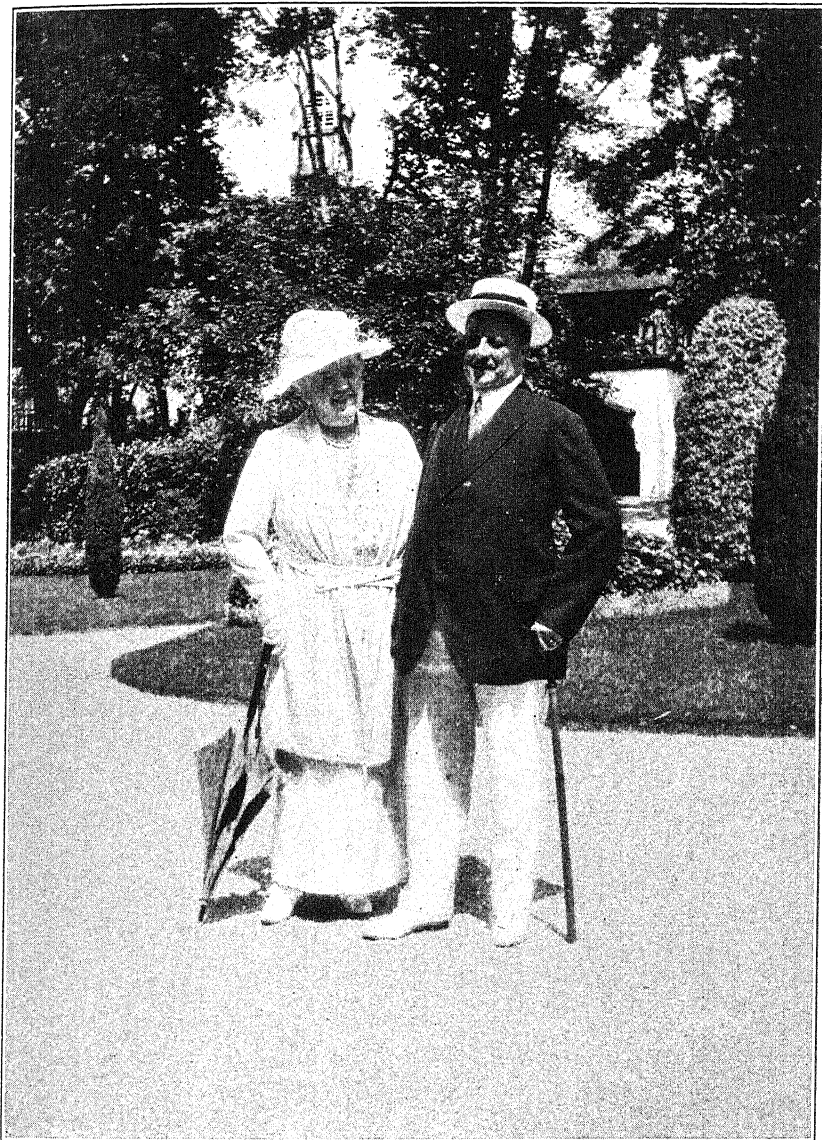
CHATEAU DE PEYRIEU



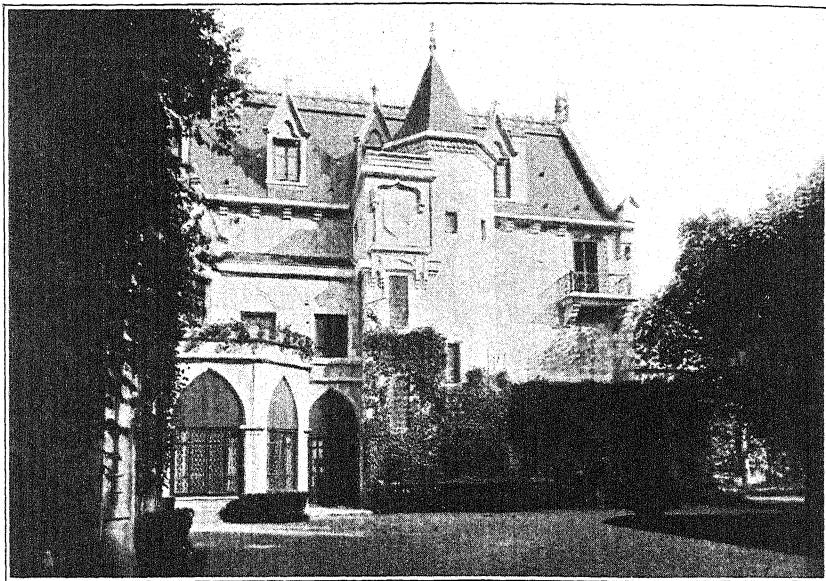
EASTERN FAÇADE, CHATEAU DE PEYRIEU



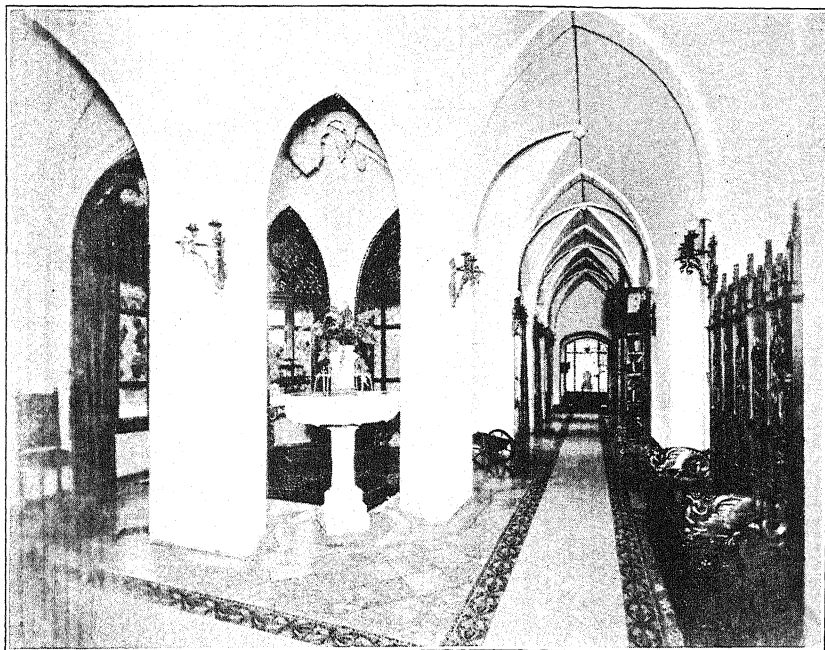
DOOR IN THE CLOISTER, CHATEAU DE PEYRIEU



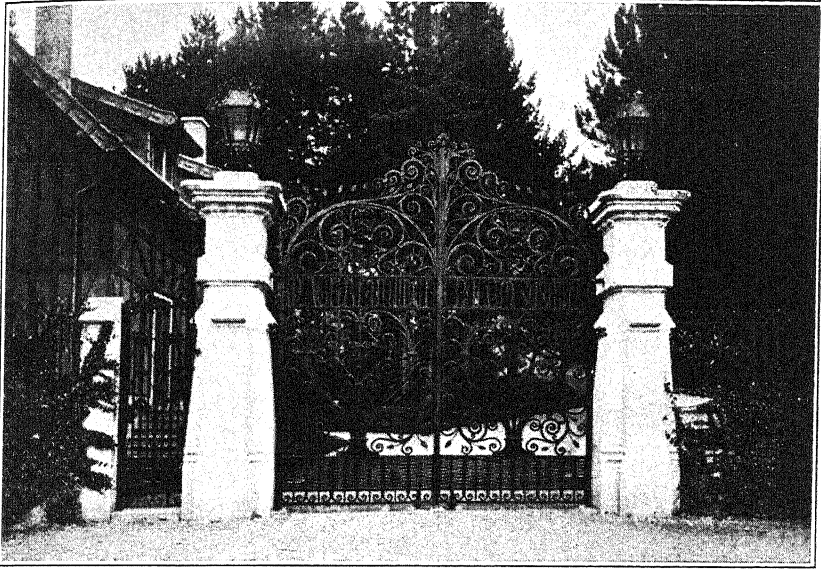
MR. AND MRS. HOFF
In the garden, Château de Peyrieu



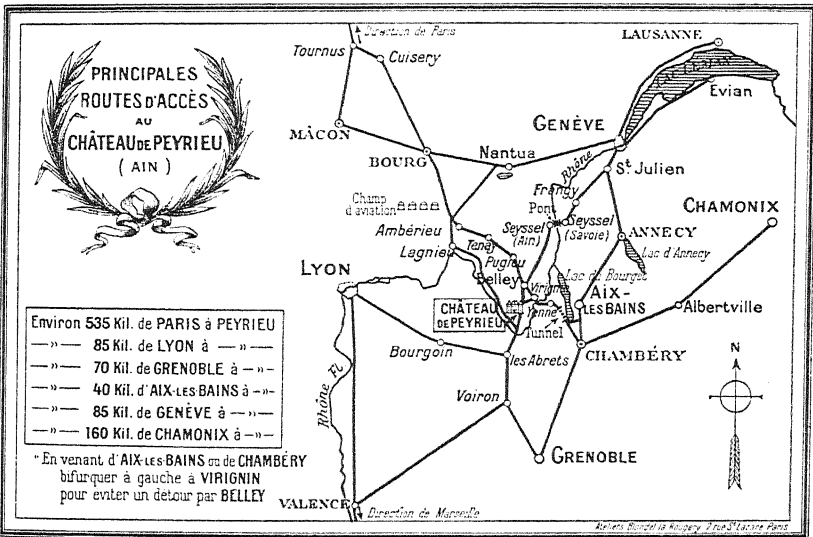
North side of Court of Honor



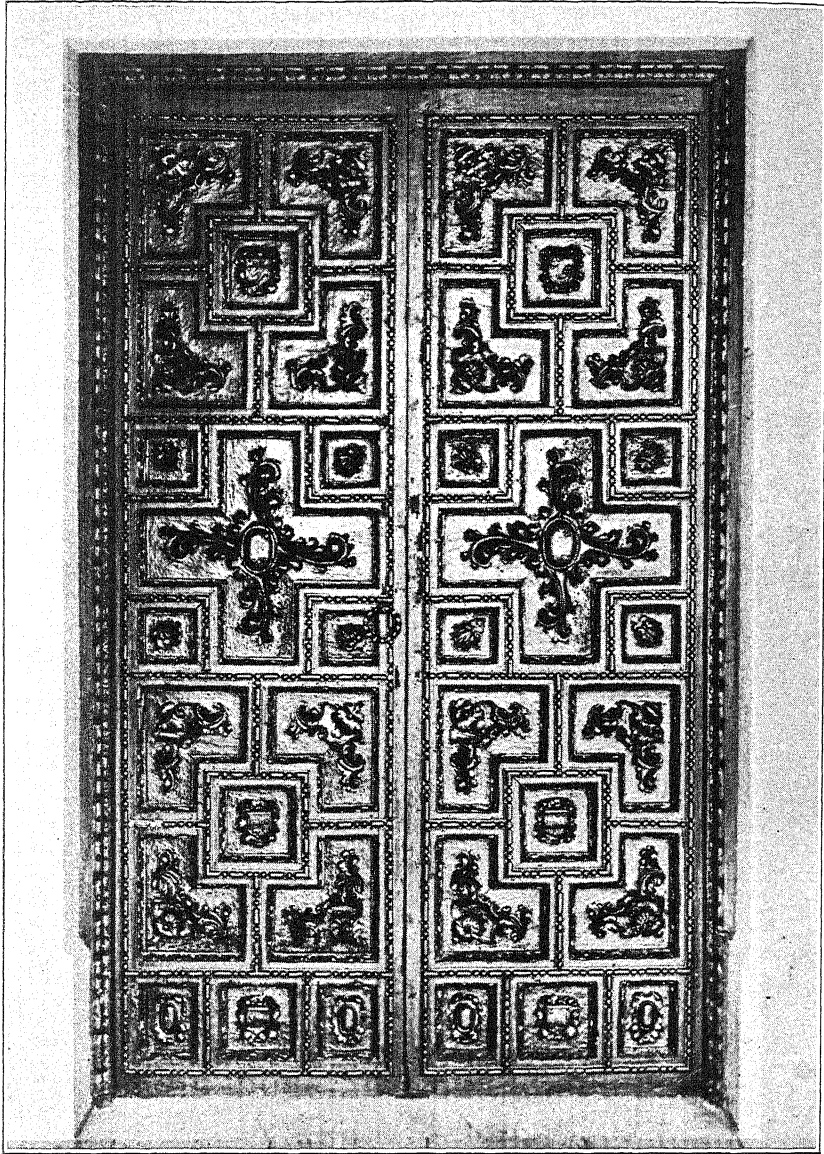
The Cloister
CHATEAU DE PEYRIEU



ENTRANCE GATE, CHATEAU DE PEYRIEU



ROUTE CARD SHOWING LOCATION OF CHATEAU DE PEYRIEU



PRINCIPAL ENTRANCE, THE BUNGALOW AT 'LE MOULIN'

well exposed to the sun. The architectural details of the château are varied; Gothic elements prevail, with turreted towers and terraces reminiscent of the Early Renaissance; the ground-plan is that of a semi-quadrangle. The old gray stone walls, which are pleasantly mellowed by the years, are surrounded by the greenness of trees and shrubs. Winding pathways lead to attractive nooks and points of vantage from which one can obtain different views of the lovely landscape. Springs of crystal-clear water abound in the estate, forming cascades and delicate fountains. To the north of the château lies the rose garden. Within the park is an old Gothic arch and at the entrance are fine old wrought-iron gates. High among the trees can be seen the clock tower in which is the *carillon*.

The interior of the château is no less charming. When Mrs. Hoff made her quick decision to purchase Peyrieu, the château was by no means ready for occupancy; although picturesque, it was not altogether comfortable, in the modern sense. A battalion of workmen came for a few months, however, and the château received all modern improvements and conveniences, and was freshly decorated. New furnishings were added, but all changes were made with an eye to preserving the Old-World atmosphere. At Christmas time, in 1909, the doors were thrown open to welcome Mr. and Mrs. Hoff and their guests. Only then, when all details were complete, could an adequate idea of the beauty of the whole be formed. Several ancient *vitrines* which stand along the hall enclose hundreds of rare editions and old armorial bindings, including those of the fifteenth century with chains, alongside those of the Renaissance, among which are several of very rare origin, such as those that belonged to Francis I, Henry II, Henry III, Henry IV, or to the celebrated collectors Grolier, Maïoli, or Canevarius.

Each period is represented, the seventeenth century by

the master binders Ruelle, Boyet, le Gascon, who bound the most beautiful books for Louis XIII and Louis XIV, as well as for the other principal personages of the Court.

The eighteenth century is represented by the work of the bookbinders by royal appointment to Louis XV and Louis XVI, Padeloup, Derôme, Le Monnier, Bradel, and others.

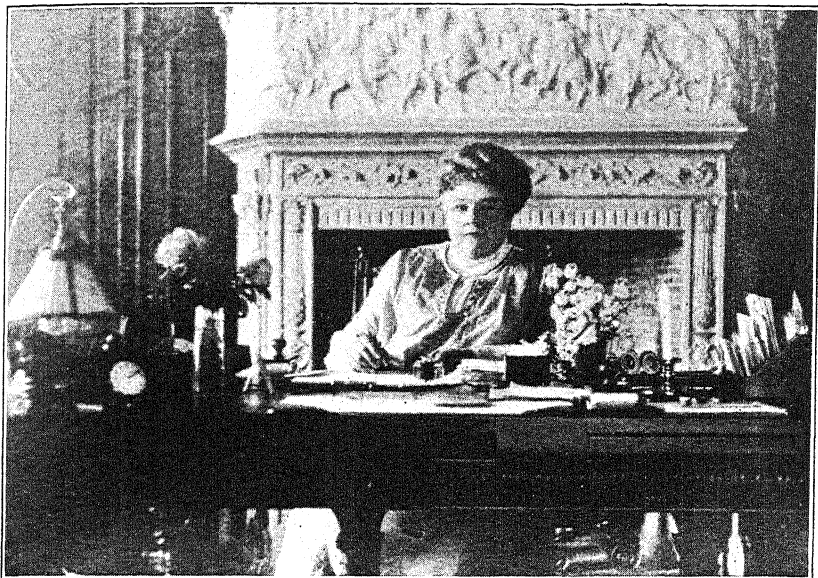
One sees here the bindings of very rare type, formerly in the possession of Colbert, Madame de Maintenon, Madame de Pompadour, la Comtesse du Barry, Marie Antoinette, Madame Elisabeth, la Princesse de Lamballe, as well as the superb mosaic bindings of Padeloup and of Le Monnier.

The period of the Empire is represented by the books bearing the arms of Napoleon I and of the Empress Josephine, from the Malmaison library and from Queen Hortense.

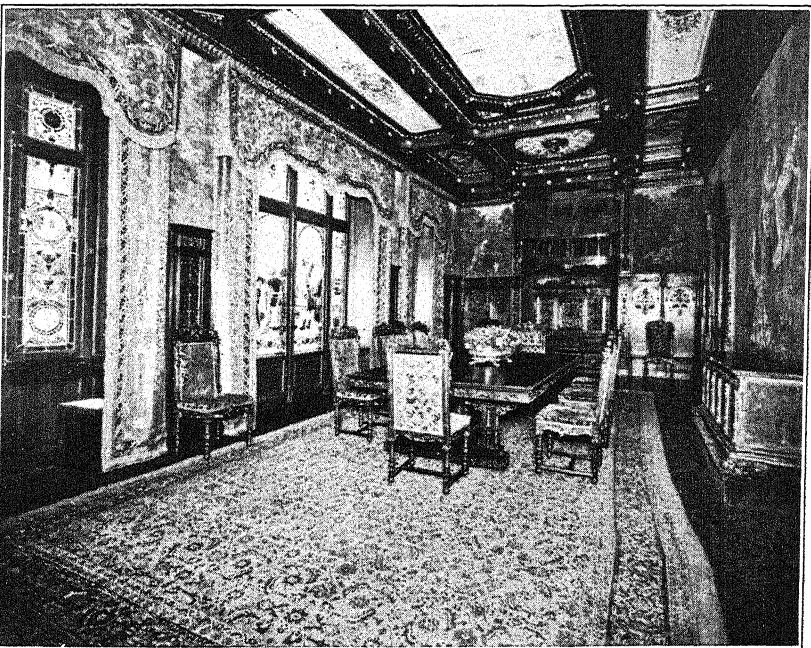
Books bound by Courteval, Thouvenin, Bozérien, Gruel-Déforge, Simier form a very fine collection of the periods of the Restoration and of the Second Empire. Eminent students, connoisseurs of the book treasures of the world, have made an illustrated catalogue of this unique collection, which Monsieur Paul Gruel, of Paris, considers one of the most important private collections in existence.

This entrance hall was formerly the old cloister and is flagged with white stone to preserve the picturesque touch of early times.

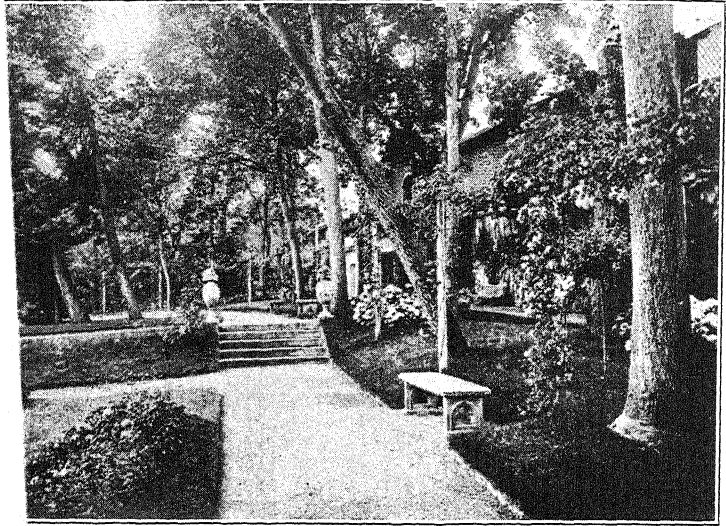
From this hall one enters the Renaissance Salon, one of the most interesting rooms to the visitor. The carved wainscoting and the heavy doors are fashioned from wood grown on the estate. Beauvais tapestries adorn the walls and a monumental fireplace, of stone richly carved, is built into one side of the room. The bas-relief over it represents the Congress of the Field of the Cloth of Gold,



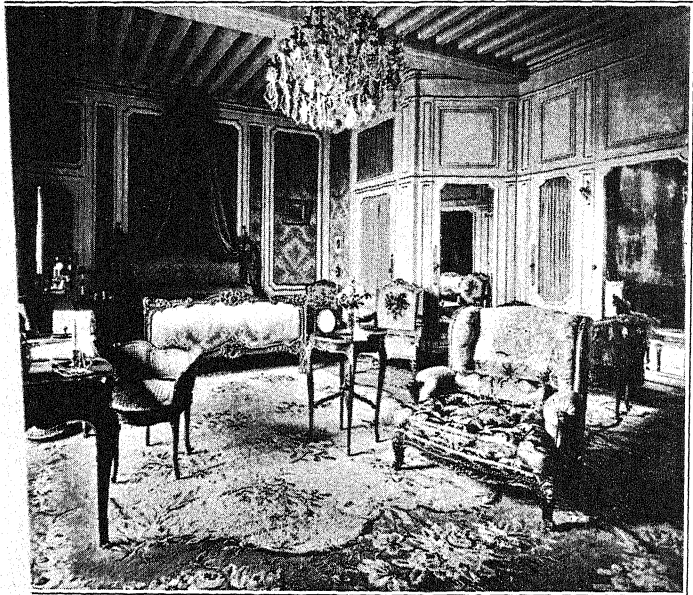
Mrs. Hoff at her worktable before the fireplace
representing 'Field of the Cloth of Gold'



Dining-room
CHATEAU DE PEYRIEU



Rose garden



Mrs. Hoff's room
CHATEAU DE PEYRIEU

the memorable meeting between Francis I of France and Henry VIII of England in 1520. At present the *châtelaine* uses this salon as a study and intimate reception room.

The old *Salle des Gardes* is now a library, containing works by the best modern authors. Its immense fireplace extends to the ceiling and bears the arms of a former owner. In the Grand Salon are found tapestries once owned by the Empress Eugénie and used in the Tuileries.

The large dining-hall is in Renaissance style, panelled in carved oak, each panel in a different design. At one end a musicians' gallery overlooks the stately hall.

Life at Peyrieu is of necessity pleasant, as Mr. and Mrs. Hoff and their guests have discovered. There one lives in a historic old manor rich in romantic tradition, yet the amenities of modern life are present also. Beauty is always before one's eyes within the château as well as without, the gardens, the park, the prospect of the Rhone Valley, the mountains — beauty in the works of man and of nature. There are walks to be taken along the winding paths, among the mountains. As a change from the calm life of Peyrieu, there is the variety of an occasional trip to Aix-les-Bains with its busy resort life. Switzerland is within easy distance, Italy only a little farther away. A constant stream of guests finds pleasure and relaxation at Peyrieu, many French, many American, and always various other nations of the earth are represented. Later, Mrs. Hoff was to add to the resources of Peyrieu, and then the château was to play an important part in her philanthropic work. Even from the first, the large number of employés at Peyrieu were not forgotten; they have their own building containing a billiard-room, piano, victrola, and lounging-room. They look upon Peyrieu as their home.

And a home in the best sense of the word it is — for Mr. and Mrs. Hoff and for their guests. In both châteaux, Le Bréau and Peyrieu, the daughter's family cherish the

atmosphere which Mrs. Hoff's talent as a home-maker has created. The best of the Old World has been retained to mingle with the best of the modern. The beauty of old traditions, of a calm and sane country life, of nature, and of human character distinguishes both Le Bréau and Peyrieu.

CHAPTER IV

TRAGEDY

WHEN the Great War broke out, Mr. and Mrs. Hoff were at Peyrieu enjoying their usual summer idyl. Their two little grandsons were with them, Ernest aged two and a half and Charles two years younger. Life seemed very good to everyone at the château; it did not seem possible that anything could spoil the serenity of its daily round.

Family groups all over Europe were roused from the same security on that fateful morning when the call to arms sounded through town and village. Action suddenly became the law. Everyone did something. While the gray armies advanced, men from every corner of France sprang into the ranks, and the women smiled through their tears as they waved their farewells and took up the tasks their men had left.

Paris became the nerve center of Europe. As telegraphic messages clicked back and forth, local wires buzzed and the extent of the disturbance began to be realized. Foreigners living in France made haste to leave. Western-bound steamships were crowded to capacity, and those who could get no farther took refuge in a neutral country.

But Mr. and Mrs. Hoff did not join the exodus. Their first thought was to protect the two babies whose mother and father were in Paris and their call to service rang clear and decisive. Their fate was inseparable from the fate of France. Château de Peyrieu, situated close to Switzerland, three hours by rail to Italy, was a strategic point for war service. Troops sent from the South passed here, as did also the refugees from the North, and the

grands blessés, or incurables, who arrived by way of Switzerland.

All signs of luxury at the château were put away and the ground floor was turned over each day to workers, mustered from the whole neighborhood, to prepare bandages and other hospital supplies and necessary packages of clothing and food for the soldiers at the front.

Mr. Hoff left the château for Paris a few days before mobilization with no thought of approaching war. The château was filled with guests, the family of Mr. Labouchere of Holland and a group of young Frenchmen. On arrival in Paris, Mr. Hoff caught the signs of impending war, hurried back to the château, and within a few hours every guest was on his way to his own country or to mobilization camp. Within three weeks three of the young men who had been the gayest of the guests were killed.

Later, when Mr. Hoff went to Paris to assist in organizing an American Relief Unit, Mrs. Hoff prepared to receive the refugees who were already pouring southward from the occupied territory beyond the Marne. Her thoughts had gone forward, also, to the armies of the wounded who would soon be returning from the front.

When the refugees came, Mr. and Mrs. Hoff organized a colony on their property in temporary quarters. As many as possible of these homeless wanderers were given work on the grounds, that they might not feel altogether dependent on the bounty of their hosts.

When the 133d Regiment was organized, it included many men from Peyrieu and vicinity and this regiment chose Mrs. Hoff as godmother. One cold dreary morning, Mr. and Mrs. Hoff stood with the French commander at the door of their château while the men passed in review. They could not leave for the front without the blessing of their godmother. With the regiment came the families of those who lived within a short distance of the château



REVIEW OF 133D REGIMENT (FRENCH) BY MR. AND MRS. HOFF AT
BEGINNING OF GREAT WAR



CANTEEN OF MADAME BIZOLON, AT THE RAILROAD STATION, LYONS,
FRANCE

— wives, children, grandmothers, the old men. Mrs. Hoff gave to the officers, for the three thousand soldiers, the message that no wife, child, or aged person would suffer material need while they were fighting at the front. As the regiment marched down the mountain from the château to take the train in the valley, the beautiful notes of the Massenet song rang out from the *carillon* tower, but the assurance was then given that the bells would ring no more until peace should be declared.

In November came the first trainload of the *grands blessés*, those hopelessly maimed relics of the War's earliest engagements, on their way to a hospital in Lyons. The train passed through Amberieu near to Peyrieu, very early in the morning, but Mr. and Mrs. Hoff were out to meet it. Mrs. Hoff herself has told the story of that meeting:

It was four o'clock on a November morning. We had prepared large sacks of necessaries for the wounded, wearing apparel, food, and anything that might give them a little comfort until they found shelter in hospitals. The train drew to the station, and as I looked down the track the lights made the great coaches look like a gala train, for they were all festooned with flowers and flags.

The first man who stepped down from the silent car through the windows of which no peering faces gazed, for it was filled with the blind, was a personal friend of Mr. Hoff's. His first words were: 'My wife doesn't know. Will you tell her?'

Thereafter no trainload passed either to or from the front that did not receive its bundles of supplies and its message of good cheer from these Americans. They were trying to carry out the desire of their countryman who had said, 'Let me live in a house by the side of the road and be a friend to man.'

On one occasion, when Mr. and Mrs. Hoff attended a fête at Aix-les-Bains, given for the benefit of disabled

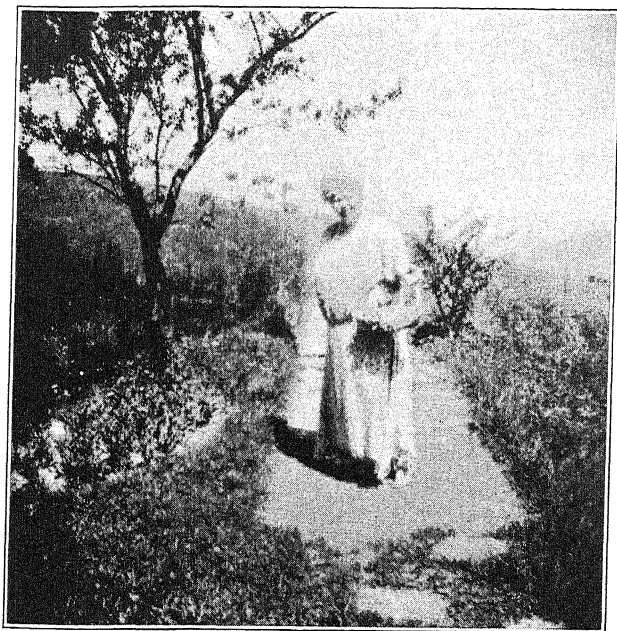
soldiers, the principal speech of the day was given by Monsieur Herriot, Mayor of Lyons, on re-education of the mutilated; a considerable disturbance arose outside their *loge*. Mrs. Hoff opened the door, and there stood a man in tears. He said he had walked many miles to hear Monsieur Herriot speak, and when he got there every seat had been taken. Mrs. Hoff invited him to sit with her, and when at first glance she saw no sign of his incapacity, she asked him if he had friends who needed re-education.

'No, I am myself without arms. Both were shot off.'

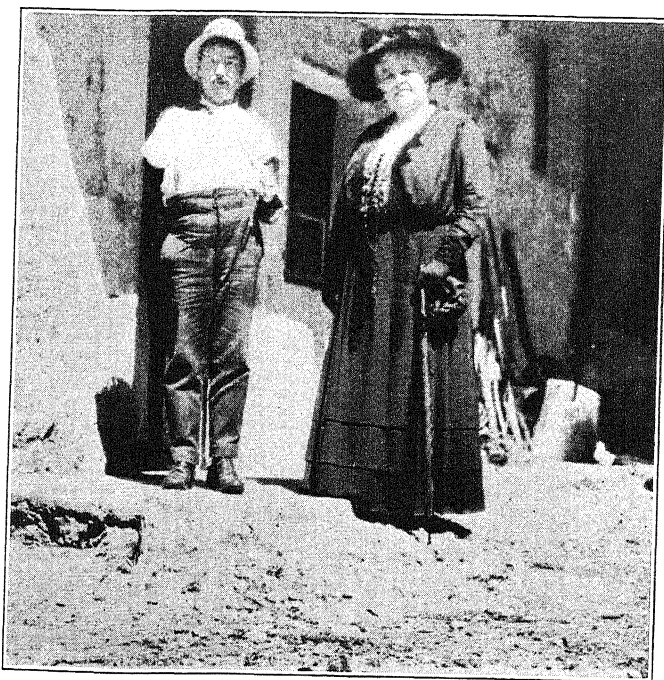
He was presented afterward to Monsieur Herriot, who saw to it that he received instruction in a trade, and with the help of improved artificial limbs, which were given him, he became self-supporting.

One day the post brought Mrs. Hoff a letter from Russia. The signature was strange, but the writer spoke of old days in Detroit and of the Friday evening Bible classes which she, a Polish girl, had attended. Later she had married a Russian and settled in his country. She had heard of Mrs. Hoff's work in France and wondered whether she would extend her sympathy to still another country. If Mrs. Hoff cared to send supplies to a few of Russia's needy, she herself would see that they were distributed. As Mrs. Hoff could hear of no actual need without responding, she gladly added this duty to her others and dispatched carloads of food and clothing into famine areas of Russia.

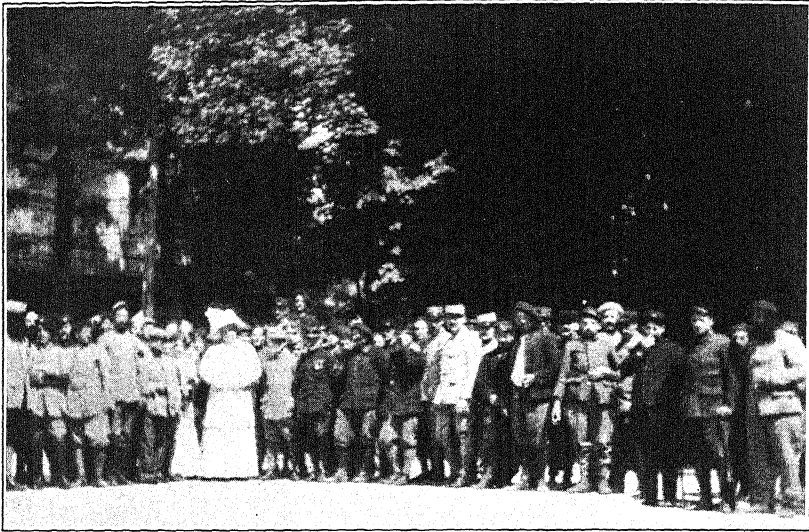
During the entire War she never forsook her post at Peyrieu. This was by no means a protected spot, notwithstanding the nearness of Switzerland, a neutral country. That the risk she took was undoubted was later hinted at when the report came that papers were found on the front showing plans of the enemy to take Château de Peyrieu and use it for the Etat Major. But the winter months saw her no more in Paris. Instead, she



MRS. HOFF, WITH 'BASKET'



MONSIEUR EXERTIER
Mutilated in Great War (without arms)



GASSED SOLDIERS FROM HOSPITAL, AIX-LES-BAINS



PICNIC ARRANGED BY MRS. HOFF FOR AMERICAN SOLDIERS,
MOUNT REVARD, NEAR AIX-LES-BAINS

visited many hospitals to investigate hygienic conditions and found running water in only one out of ten of these. She became a familiar figure at the hospitals of Belley, Lyons, Aix-les-Bains, Vichy, and all surrounding towns. Even her visits to America were postponed. Since that first home-coming six months after her marriage, she had never failed to visit her homeland every few years. It was characteristic of her to long for her family who were still in Detroit, her old friends, and the scenes she had loved as a girl. But all these things gave way to the stern realities of war. At least, she had the satisfaction of knowing that her home city was turning out thousands of Liberty motors and that redwood from the virgin forests her father had bought was going into the construction of airplanes.

During her husband's absences in his frequent visits to Paris to aid in American relief work, Mrs. Hoff naturally suffered anxiety, for the trip, which normally took nine hours, often took three or four times as long during the War. But she was always busy, and from her outward composure and cheerfulness no one would have guessed her uneasiness.

The prolonged tiresome journey each week took Mr. Hoff through Lyons, where he had to change for the Paris express. Walking down the platform one morning early in the War, he noticed a group of *poilus* gathered about an improvised buffet. Going closer, he discovered a cheerful little French woman dressed as one of the people in a blue apron, a black shawl, and with no hat. Standing between her steaming cans of coffee and chocolate, she distributed smiles and greetings with the breakfast that sent many a soldier on his way with renewed courage. Near-by stood a young girl beside a basket of bread.

'*Venez, venez, mon petit chasseur,*' called the woman.
'*Non, on ne paie pas ici.*'

No, not a soldier paid for his little breakfast. Mr. Hoff, ever on the alert, discovered a tin cup set out for the coins that travelers might wish to contribute. He quietly slipped a gold piece into the cup and went away.

'What society does this work?' he inquired of a station porter.

'*C'est Madame Bizolon, une très brave femme,*' he was told. Her son was at the front, and from almost the first day of the War she had been there every morning by three o'clock to give the soldiers who passed through the station their cup of coffee. In the afternoon she begged for money in the town.

After that first morning, it became Mr. Hoff's habit, while waiting at Lyons, to stand beside the little canteen for a moment, watching the soldiers and the woman who seemed to mother them all. Nor did he ever fail to leave a large bank-note behind him.

Madame Bizolon was not so busy that she did not notice the regular contribution, and her sharp eyes soon discovered that it always appeared after '*le bon Monsieur,*' as she called him, passed by.

One day in March, as Mr. Hoff approached the group on the station platform, he found a pale, sad face in place of the usually cheerful one of Madame Bizolon, and tears were falling on the black shawl. Still calling the soldiers, she struggled to smile at them through her tears, but, in answer to his kindly question, she sobbed out her story to Mr. Hoff.

'I have just lost my son. They have killed him. It was for him that I came here every morning. Now I have no child.' Her son had been a *chasseur* or light infantry soldier, in constant danger of his life, and he had written, '*Si je ne reviens pas, continuez votre œuvre. Elle est belle!*'

Then she told him how she had begun. Her son had



MADAME VEUVE BIZOLON
Mother of Soldiers, 'The Angel of Lyons'



been among the first to go, leaving her alone in her cobbler's shop. She had been a widow for many years. A few days after he left, as she was going through the station on her way to deliver a pair of shoes, she saw a man from the same scouting troop as her son, and she gave him money for her *petit*. The next letter she received from the front said that the *chasseur* had delivered her money and had been killed immediately afterward at Raon.

The next day after seeing her son's friend, she was at the station again, still watching the soldiers. One of them who had just got off the train rushed up to her and asked her if she would get him some baby's undervests. His home had been taken from him by the enemy, and his wife in the train had just given birth to another child.

'Give me the little one,' said Madame Bizolon.

'I will give him to no one!' he replied vehemently. 'I have lost two children. I do not know where they are.'

That day Madame Bizolon went to the shops and was given clothing for the family. Her mind was full of plans, for an inspiration had come to her. 'The buffets do not open until eight o'clock,' she had thought. 'I can be here at three and give the soldiers their first cup of coffee.' The next day she got permission from the authorities to serve coffee there, and from then on she spent her mornings in her improvised buffet, hoping always to see someone else who knew her son.

After spending many months serving the soldiers from this wheelbarrow canteen, without shelter, in rain, snow, sleet, and wind, the Mayor of Lyons, Monsieur Herriot, was presented to her by Mr. Hoff, and soon after a kiosk was built bearing the sign, '*Déjeuner du Soldat, Œuvre de Madame Bizolon.*'

Now that her son was dead, she would continue her work, for the soldiers were her children. '*Je ne suis plus heureuse qu'ici. Je le fais pour lui.*'

She wanted to know the name of the man who listened with so much sympathy and understanding, but he insisted on remaining anonymous.

The modest way in which she carried on her work appealed to Mr. Hoff. He began to see piles of clothing standing beside the buffet and learned that refugees as well as soldiers were being cared for. Some of the articles, she told him, had come from merchants in the town where she had asked for money, and others had been given her by friends.

Learning of the gradual expansion of this service, Mrs. Hoff wrote a pamphlet which she called '*Je l'ai fait pour lui,*' and circulated it among her friends and persons of influence. This brought contributions to Madame Bizolon, along with other sums that were given to administer help somewhere in France. Mr. Hoff always left the name and address of the donor of these sums, but never his own, and when Madame Bizolon found these, she did not rest a moment until a charming note of thanks had been dispatched to her unknown friends.

Little refugee children who arrived alone sometimes, with merely tickets and numbers on their backs, found a mother in Madame Bizolon. She saw that they were fed and placed in kindly hands.

A neighbor of Madame Bizolon kept account of all receipts and disbursements, as a labor of love. The two women often discussed '*le bon Monsieur*' and wondered who their benefactor could be. One morning in the Lyons newspaper, Madame Bizolon read an account of the fête at Aix-les-Bains for disabled soldiers, at which Monsieur Herriot had spoken. She read that among those who had contributed generously to the fête was a Mr. Hoff, of the Château de Peyrieu.

'*C'est lui!*' she exclaimed, '*mon bon Monsieur!*'

After two years of searching and wondering, she had

discovered his name. The next time he left his accustomed envelope, she greeted him with a '*Merci, Monsieur Hoff!*'

When he asked her how she knew his name, she pulled the clipping from her purse and said, '*C'est bien vous, n'est-ce pas, Monsieur? Ça ne pourrait pas être que vous, n'est-ce pas, Monsieur?*'

During the remainder of the War, Mr. and Mrs. Hoff took an increasingly active interest in the little French woman's work. Often Mrs. Hoff stood beside her on the station platform with flowers for the soldiers. In the midst of this grim thing called war, she knew that people still hungered for beauty. The first day she stood there in her gray dress, with bunches of Parma violets in her arms, Madame Bizolon said, 'I thought our Lady of Lourdes had stepped down among us.'

The soldiers, too, were impressed by the sight of so much loveliness in that cold and dreary station. It brought a breath of romance into their blood-stained lives. One of them wrote to Madame Bizolon, 'Say to that grand and beautiful woman that I should like to see her again.'

These boys, whom Madame Bizolon called her children, looked upon her with the greatest affection. She had changed their bandages and even mended their clothes there on the station platform. Often they wrote to her as they would to their own mothers, of wounds, of decorations, or of some little thing that she could send.

Occasionally the lighter side of war was revealed to her, as on the day she received a loving note written by one of them to his sweetheart, while the sweetheart received a brief message intended for Madame Bizolon, saying, 'Dear mother — Send me a flannel band. My abdomen is cold.'

More than twenty thousand letters found their way to 'Mother Bizolon,' to each of which she sent an answer. Yet she had time to visit the hospitals almost every day,

and on errands of mercy she was so tireless that she was called 'The Angel of Lyons.'

One little refugee of sixteen reached Lyons in a serious condition after suffering unspeakable brutality at the hands of the enemy. At three o'clock in the morning someone came to Madame Bizolon to get warm clothing for the girl. A religious hospital took her in, but after a few days the doctor told Madame Bizolon she could live but a short time longer. Madame Bizolon bought a white dress for the burial, and had a photograph taken, hoping by that means to locate the girl's family. Then she had the little refugee buried in the lot with her own son and husband. A year later, the parents, who were found through the photograph, came and took the body away.

Until June, 1919, when the last of the disbanded armies had passed through on their way home, Madame Bizolon stood at her post. In all that five years, the only day she had missed was the morning after she had learned of her son's death. Such devotion could not go unrecognized, and the quiet little widow now has five decorations, including that of the Legion of Honor. But more precious to her than all her decorations are the pillow-cases full of old letters, which she still treasures, the photographs, and a *vitrine* of souvenirs from her 'children.' Madame Bizolon still continues her work in the great hospitals of Lyons, where the disfigured, mutilated veterans await death, often with no other friendly ministrations.

For Mr. and Mrs. Hoff, the friendship of this unselfish French woman was one of the most beautiful things that came to them out of the War. Through her they felt they were able to understand France better. They loved France in her extremity more than ever before. Nevertheless, when America entered the War, they rejoiced in being able to serve their own countrymen as well.

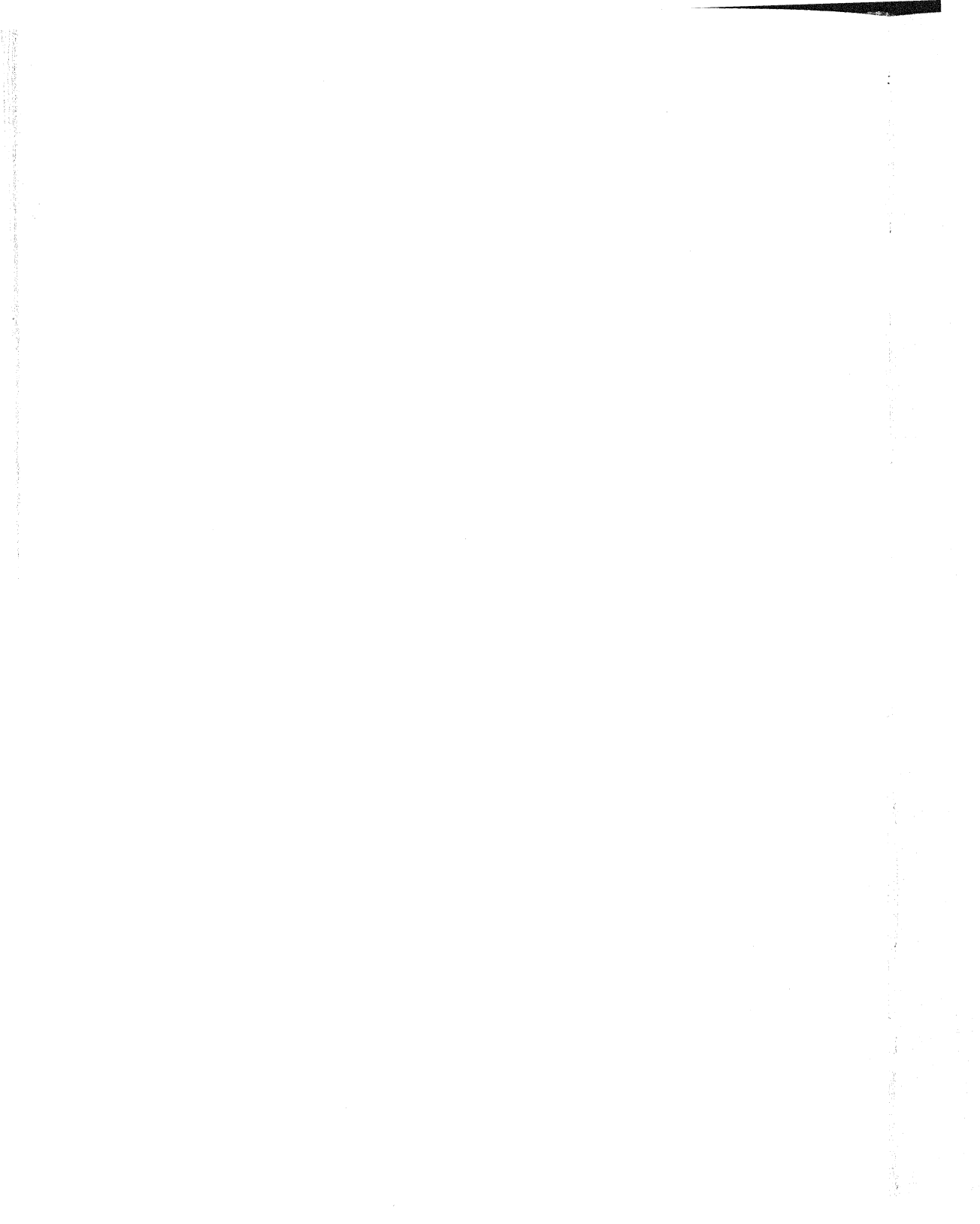
As Aix-les-Bains became an American leave center, the



à Madame Willy Hoff,
la généreuse amie de la France
& respectueux hommages.

Col. G. Debenev

LE GENERAL DEBENEV



hospitals there were designated by the military authorities to receive the American wounded and the city to receive the soldiers when for a few days they were relieved of duty. Usually the leave centers were well-known resorts like Aix-les-Bains or Nice. The Young Men's Christian Association and other organizations for War service did their utmost for the comfort and diversion of these men gathered there. At such centers the most successful entertainers were always to be found. During several months that Mrs. Hoff spent at Aix-les-Bains undergoing a course of treatment, she began a work which brought comforting news to many homes in America. Each day, as she walked down the street and met an American soldier, she would greet him, and in the course of the conversation find out who was nearest to him at home—mother, wife, sister, or sweetheart. On that same day she wrote a letter to the loved one waiting in America, saying that she had seen her boy and taken him by the hand, that he was well and in good spirits.

While staying at Vichy, where an American Hospital Center was located, with more than twenty thousand beds, she did not relax her work, but visited the American wounded and wrote letters to America giving news of them. From one such message regarding a soldier in the hospital, she received an anxious reply. A mother asked again for the date that Mrs. Hoff had seen her son, as she had received notice from the Army Headquarters the day after Mrs. Hoff's letter came that her son had been killed in battle. The letter had given her courage, however, to believe that some mistake had been made. Mrs. Hoff not only assured this mother that her son was still alive in the hospital, but, as soon as he was able to travel, she sent him back to America in the care of a nurse. And on her first visit there after the War, this boy and his mother were the first persons to greet her as her feet touched the pier.

In many other cases where soldiers were missing, Mrs. Hoff was instrumental in tracing them, even in recovering their bodies when official channels failed.

These letters to soldiers, as well as to their dear ones in America, grew into a large correspondence which was always kept up. As soon as a letter was received, Mrs. Hoff addressed an envelope for its reply, and, if there was not time to answer it then, she made little notes, in the corner where the stamp was to be put, of what she wanted to say. Oftener than not the letters to the soldiers were accompanied by a package of cigarettes or candy, or funds to give one of her 'boys' a little spending money for his leave.

All this work was done spontaneously and not as a burden. One never heard her say how many letters she had written each day nor how many little duties the correspondence brought her. In the same way, her visits to the hospitals seemed the natural outpouring of a mother's love. The love which had been spent so lavishly on girls both in America and in France was now turned toward boys and the mothers of boys.

Her mere presence seemed to transform an austere hospital ward into something almost like home. A friend who accompanied her on one of her hospital rounds says of her visit to a youthful English soldier who was suffering great pain: 'I shall never forget the look on the boy's face as his eyes fastened on the vision of this good woman, whose love and sympathy were written on her countenance. She went over to him quite simply, took his hand and stroked his head like a mother.'

Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Hoff ever lost an opportunity to befriend a soldier. One day at the Culoz station, Mr. Hoff saw some men in American uniform. He approached them in his friendly fashion, but try as he would he could get no information from them as to who they were or what they

were doing in that town. In France one becomes accustomed to the politeness and subtlety of the French in conversation, which is in direct opposition to the naïve and open willingness of many Americans to discuss almost anything even with a chance bystander. Therefore, Mr. Hoff was rather astonished to be obliged to ferret out from other sources that they were special police stationed to watch this important junction near the Swiss border. It amused him that they had been able to conceal their mission and identity so well.

Returning to the group, he told them that he was an American himself, living not far away, and that he would like to have them come over to see him.

One of them replied, 'Oh, yes, we heard there was an American living up the track, who works for Rockefeller.'

He admitted that he was the person, and renewed his invitation as he left them.

A few days later, as Mr. Hoff was returning from town, he saw one of these soldiers riding toward the château in a carriage. Carriages were a great luxury in those days, but this resourceful American had managed to get hold of one. For he was on his way to accept Mr. Hoff's invitation, and nothing less than a carriage would do.

Mr. Hoff greeted his guest cordially, and they proceeded together, stopping long enough in the village to send word ahead that an American friend would be there for luncheon.

At the château the soldier seemed a little ill at ease, in spite of the genuine warmth of his reception. He looked forward to luncheon in the great dining-room as an ordeal, but during the American meal which the chef had been instructed to prepare, his reserve wore away. At the sight of canned corn, he became almost effusive, and asked to be pardoned for any breach of etiquette he might make, as he was not used to such surroundings. He had only come

on a dare, he admitted. He and a friend were staying with a French family, and the day before they had helped him rehearse the whole visit, conversation and all.

When mince pie was brought in for dessert, his amazement and gratification were complete.

'Gee!' he exclaimed, 'if I wrote the folks that I had had lunch with an American family in a castle once inhabited by dukes, and had mince pie for dessert, they'd say, "Joe's been drinking."'

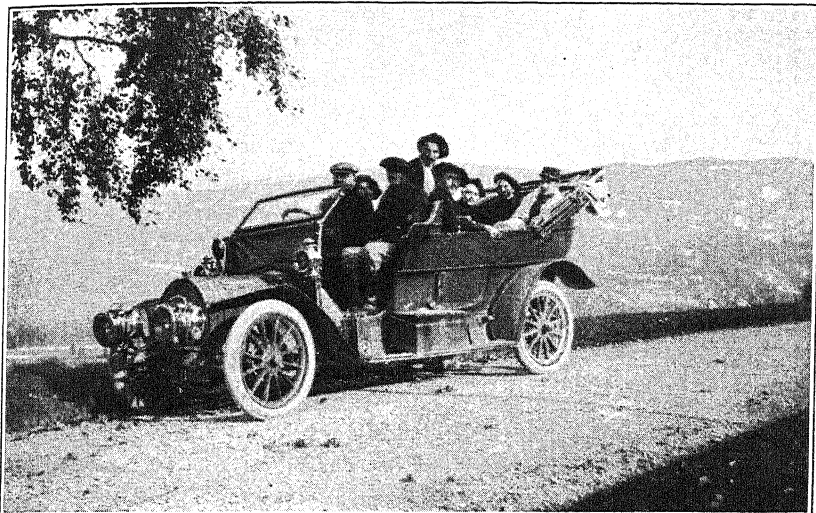
Château de Peyrieu soon became a *rendez-vous* for the soldiers. Many groups from the leave areas were invited there to spend the day. They wandered over the grounds and marveled at the treasures in the château. To them all, Mrs. Hoff became a friend, not only for the moment, but one whom they could turn to as they would to a member of their own family.

All these activities did not diminish her work in the neighborhood. Wherever illness or death entered, there was Mrs. Hoff performing her gentle ministrations with unflinching sympathy; bereavement was found not only in the simple homes, but also in the mountain sanatorium for tuberculosis patients, which Mr. and Mrs. Hoff supported throughout the War. Missions of charity filled many hours of her week.

One day, bound for a neighboring town, she found herself sitting in a train beside a *poilu* whose head was bowed with grief. Tears were falling on his jacket and the great sobs of a man in pain shook his body.

'What is the matter, my friend?' she asked, putting her hand on his arm.

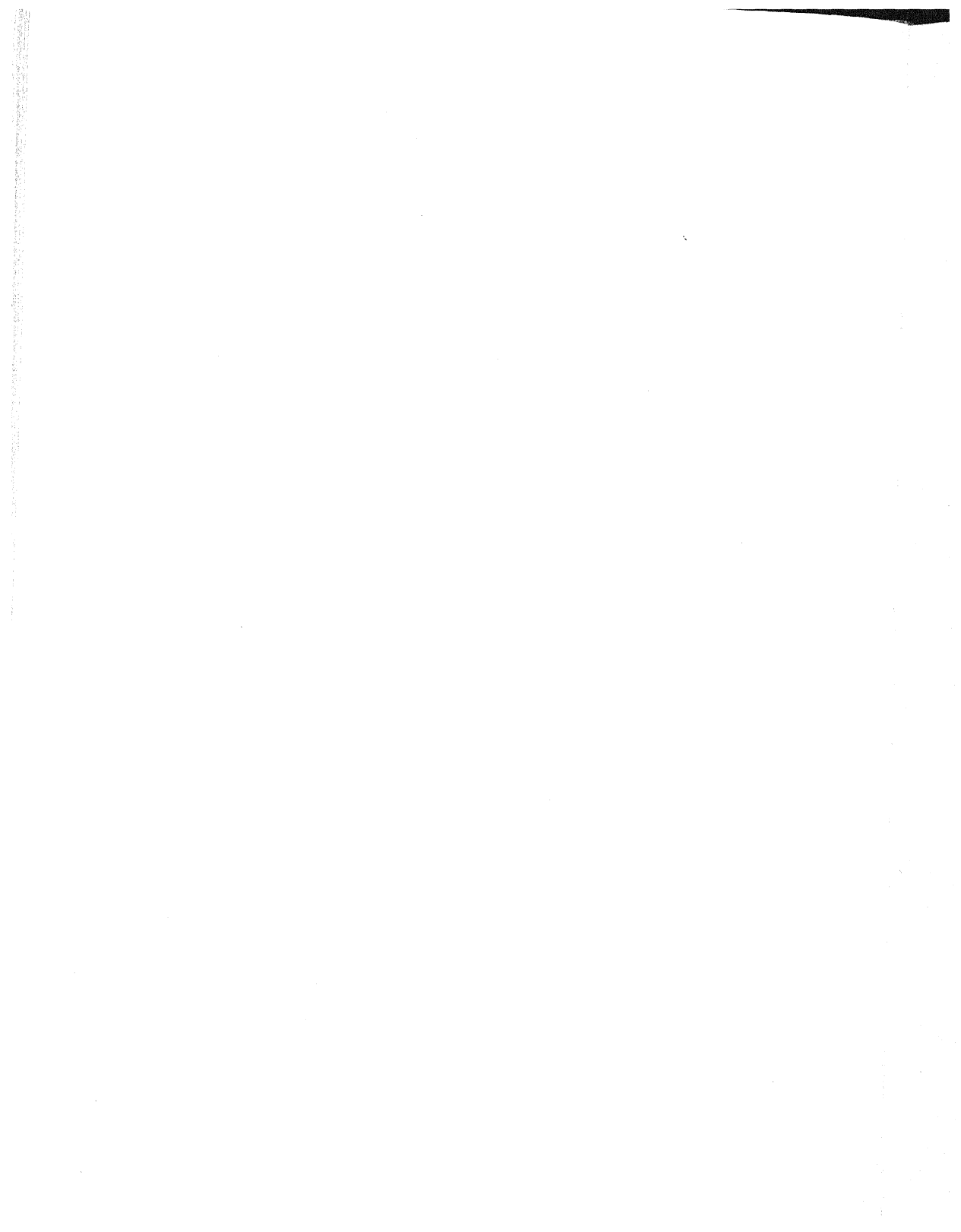
Lifting his eyes, he looked at her face as if from a great distance. Finally, almost a smile broke over his features as he said, 'I know you, Madame Hoff. You were near my wife when she died. I came up from the front to bury her, and am now going back, leaving three little orphans behind.'



Wounded Soldiers *en route* to Château de Peyrieu



Wounded Soldiers at Château de Peyrieu. Le Comte de Seyssel at the wheel
WOUNDED SOLDIERS FROM THE HOSPITALS, GUESTS AT CHATEAU DE
PEYRIEU



'Where do you live?' she asked.

'On the road to Peyrieu. Yesterday in the evening I took my three little ones by the hand and we climbed the hill leading to the château. We were underneath your window, where we saw a light — the light that has burned every evening, they say, since the beginning of the War. I said to them, "If ever you find yourselves forsaken, come to this light. Another mother is living there and she will take care of you."' "

All this he related simply, his face lined deep with grief. She promised to look after his children; and now that the War is over, she often stops at his little cottage in the village and recalls those heroic days.

During all these years of trial, tuberculosis was a great scourge throughout France. As the struggle wore on and victory seemed almost at hand, the dreaded disease stalked more relentlessly than ever through a weakened population. Mrs. Hoff saw all too well the ravages it was making in her beloved Peyrieu, and she tried to rouse public opinion to the dangers of this which she considered France's worst enemy.

In 1917, she recorded the touching story of a refugee family whom she and Mr. Hoff befriended, and in a printed pamphlet distributed it among friends and people of influence. In writing this story, 'The Shadow on the Threshold of Victory,' she has told the narrative with true feeling and strong appeal.

It was a warm summer afternoon in August, 1917. A party of friends was seated in one of those beautiful *Cours d'Honneur*, which give such a sense of old-time grandeur and intimacy to the châteaux of the Renaissance period. The tea-table, under stately trees, glistened with its wealth of old silver, and the hospitable doors of the historic castle spoke of the knights and ladies, who, long ago, lived within and looked out over the same luxuriant and fertile hills of Savoie — away to the mountains, which seemed now to shut out the

horrors of that other life, the life of bloodshed, where, on the fields of France, men lie writhing in the agonies of death, where men live close to eternity, and in the cruel clutches of war forget the supreme command — Love one another.

In this little corner of France, protected by distance from the atmosphere of brutality and hate, no reminder of suffering marred the symphony of nature's beauty, and in our memory of other days, days of happiness and freedom, we allowed the spell of deception to hold us captives.

Upon this scene there walked a soldier boy — only a *poilu*. The *musette* and helmet and many extra packages told of the end of a *permission*, a few days' release from trench imprisonment, only to return and to recommence the life of bloodshed.

We looked at the young man's face as he approached the table to say good-bye to the *châteline*, who had befriended him, and down the bronzed cheeks great tears were falling and all his body shook under the strain of suppressed sorrow.

Three years ago, when France was summoned to arms, this soldier was working happily in the fields of northern France. His bride of a few weeks was his inspiration, and the promise of success urged him on to serious effort to possess a little *foyer* or home, which is the ambition of every French laboring man.

There was no hesitancy when the decree of mobilization was placed on the door of the town hall. He went forth to meet duty fearlessly, leaving all that was dearest on earth to him, to the mercy of Providence. The enemy soon invaded the district, and the modest home was laid in ruins. The young wife was driven to seek safety in a cellar, where for two years she lived with her baby, whose first breath was drawn in that dark and poisonous shelter. The mother tried to protect her little one from the evil effects of the raging cannon, which never ceased to volley forth destruction, but the child became deaf and paralyzed by the crashing noises of warfare.

There came a day when escape from this prison was effected. The mother and child were repatriated, reaching France by way of Switzerland. Alas! the fatal malady, which has stricken humanity throughout the length and breadth of warland, had laid its brand of consuming fire on the young mother. Providence led these homeless refugees to the door of this Christian home, but the ravages of disease were fast

kindling the hectic fire on the face, and in the eyes which had already seen the dregs of suffering.

During the years since the husband had joined his regiment, he had received no word whether or not his wife lived. The barrier of the enemy's line closed all possibility of any communication. Returning from Salonica, he learned in Paris that a certain number of persons from his part of France had been repatriated, and that his wife and child were in Savoie.

The end of that journey which united husband and wife revealed the story of her mortal illness, and, as he stood before us, we understood the tragedy of that hour, when he must again leave his wife, now dying. In broken sobs he mumbled his good-bye, but these words were audible: 'I am not afraid to face death, but the thought that I shall never see my wife again is what makes so hard my going.'

His last good-bye was said. There was no physical strength left even to find his way to that fatal train a few rods distant, which might carry him to a soldier's graveless end. One of our party placed his arm around the soldier and gently led him away, and long after the steps had receded we could hear those deep sobs, that can only come from a broken heart.

The tea-table had long been forgotten. One of our number was standing on the railroad platform with the traveler-soldier, trying by promise to restore confidence and courage, while another found her place by the bedside of the stricken wife and mother — and all the cruelties and tragedies of the War were there.

The soft lights of summer eventide commenced to fall. As we turned from the scene of tears, the gentle bells of the village church pealed forth their message of peace, good will toward man, and unconsciously a prayer was lifted — that the all-sufficient, the all-loving Physician would watch between the one who lay on a fever-tossed bed and the one who went forth to death or to victory.

The call to protect France's honor continues to beckon manhood to the precipice of eternity, yet hostile forces greater than the savage foe of warring nations confront humanity. That insidious disease, tuberculosis, as a great pestilential wave is pouring forth with relentless fury, from the prison camps of Germany, from the cold damp trenches, from those unsanitary habitations in town and village. And

France, lifting her head above the sweeping vortex of disaster, looks on that grim scourge which is reaping its rich harvest of death and sowing its seed of mortality for future generations.

A day of reckoning will come, when the heroes of the War will return to homes and loved ones, claiming the glory, joy, and honor which they rightly deserve. There will be rejoicing for the reward of fame which bespeaks the courage of faithful defenders, and all of France shall rise as one man in praise. But there will be no glory, no praise for him who has been mutilated by the hand of disease. It is for him to suffer in lowly misery, with no future to obliterate the past, doomed to continue in the unending conflict against that all-powerful enemy, which offers no respite save the grave.

All honor to those victims! All praise for their sublime endurance! Let there be no forgetfulness that no man or woman is exempt from a share in exterminating that venomous monster, whose shadow falls on the lintel of victory, whose prey may be within our own walls.

May France be saved from her worst enemy!

After many weary months the day came when war was no more. The last order to go over the top had been given, the echo of the last bomb had died away, and the last wounded soldier had been brought in from No Man's Land. Mr. Hoff was in Paris when the signing of the Armistice became assured. As he could not bear to witness the joyous return of the troops without Mrs. Hoff at his side, he hurried to join her at Peyrieu. They were walking in the château garden when the church bells ringing through the valley brought news of the Armistice. Then their own *carillon*, which had been silent throughout the War, added the tuneful cadences of Massenet's song to the chorus. Words could not express their joy and relief. Silently they continued their way, thanking God in their hearts that the struggle was over. They rejoiced in the end of bloodshed.

With the quickness that was her wont, Mrs. Hoff's imagination leaped forward to the less dramatic but no

Château
de
Peyrieu
Carillon

an beïm - plus vile, man passaiant

perce le son, Perce les châteaux de Peyrieu

sur les toits peuplés

sur, sur, sur, sur, sur, sur

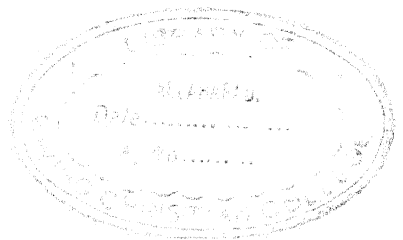
à Madame Grace Whitney Moff

en passant

M. Carillon

mars 1910

MUSIC FOR CARILLON AT PEYRIEU
Dedicated to Mrs. Hoff. (From Original by Massenet.)





less perplexing days that France had before her. As a token of her gratitude for peace, she wanted to offer some tangible service to France. Suddenly it came to her. She would share the beauties of Peyrieu with the women whom the War had compelled to face life alone. In the privacy of distant parts of the estate, she would have rest homes — already she had named them that — and invite women who needed a rest in the country to visit them as her guests. That very day she discussed her plans in detail with Mr. Hoff, and together they pledged this new gift to a war-worn humanity.

PART III

What is planted on earth will produce the flowers of a day,
Sown in heaven will bear the fruits of eternity.



CHAPTER I

CHANUT ET LE MOULIN

BEFORE the sun had set on that first Armistice Day, Mr. and Mrs. Hoff bought sufficient property adjoining the château grounds to carry out the project to which they had pledged their hearts. Mrs. Hoff's first interest was to create a home which should bear not the faintest resemblance to an institution. She wanted her guests to feel as if they were under her own roof, except for the privacy which she knew would help to heal their tired bodies and saddened hearts; to feel the nearness of someone who loved them in their time of adversity. The War had taught her as never before the value of personal contact, and she knew that during its aftermath many disillusioned souls would need human encouragement. To this service she now dedicated herself and her beloved Peyrieu.

In the midst of her plans to befriend the women of France, Mrs. Hoff could not forget those younger girls whose childhood had been cut short and who were now faced with the problem of earning a living. The War had thrust them mercilessly into the arena of daily struggle. To prepare themselves for their new rôle they would need education, and to obtain one during the period of economic readjustment which lay before France as well as the entire world would mean sacrifice and even hardship. One could not hope to lift the burden from those young shoulders, but one could offer a respite which would enable them to take it up again with fresh courage. Mrs. Hoff realized that their vacations and convalescent periods would be serious problems. But Peyrieu would provide them with beautiful surroundings, absolute quiet, and an atmosphere adapted to their perfect enjoyment.

It was part of her human wisdom that she did not build one large rest home for war widows, students, and employed girls. As the first requisite of a home is intimacy, she planned that each building should be just large enough to house eight guests at a time. Moreover, they would be located far enough apart so that each group might create its own center.

No time was lost in getting reconstruction under way, for two buildings which already existed were to be made into two charming rest homes. This work was given to returning soldiers. During the War Mr. and Mrs. Hoff had given unceasingly to those who were spending their lives in the service of their country. But now that the War was over, a gift of money to those who applied for aid would have been of little permanent help. Their invariable answer was, 'We will not give money, but we have plenty of work to do.'

Scores of men who lived in the vicinity of Peyrieu were put to work on the Rest Homes. Not only did the wages they received help to rehabilitate their homes, but the work itself was a source of new courage and strength. After so much destruction, it was a wholesome thing to lay one stone upon another, to make with their hands a beautiful dwelling.

Not only the buildings, but the gardens and the furniture Mrs. Hoff planned herself with the greatest care. The living-rooms were truly rooms to be lived in, and each chamber under her hand blossomed with individual charm. When everything was done, one would have thought these homes had always been there, so well did they fit their surroundings and so carefully had every relic of the past been preserved.

Chanut, the Rest Home for War Widows, was long and low, with dormer windows and dark rafters under the eaves. A beautiful wrought-iron lamp hangs by the entrance and

Chautauque Review
Foreword.

A Home of Rest.

A home is where Love has laid the
foundation,

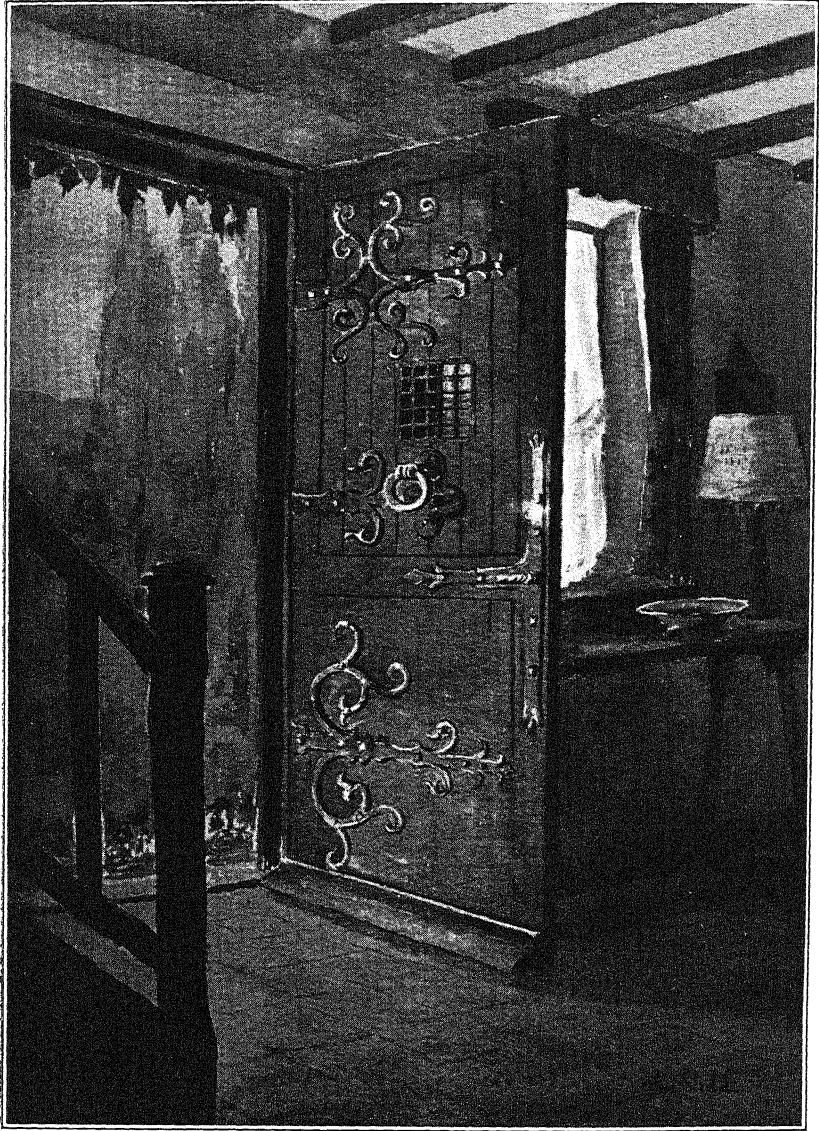
A home is here - where on the
laughing hillside God's Love opens
wide the door to receive His child

By where His own Handiwork protects
it with everlasting beauty.

May each dear life find
that rest - by peace born of the
consciousness of God's presence within us,
God's Love comforting us,
God's presence blessing us.

Yours in the bond of a common sisterhood

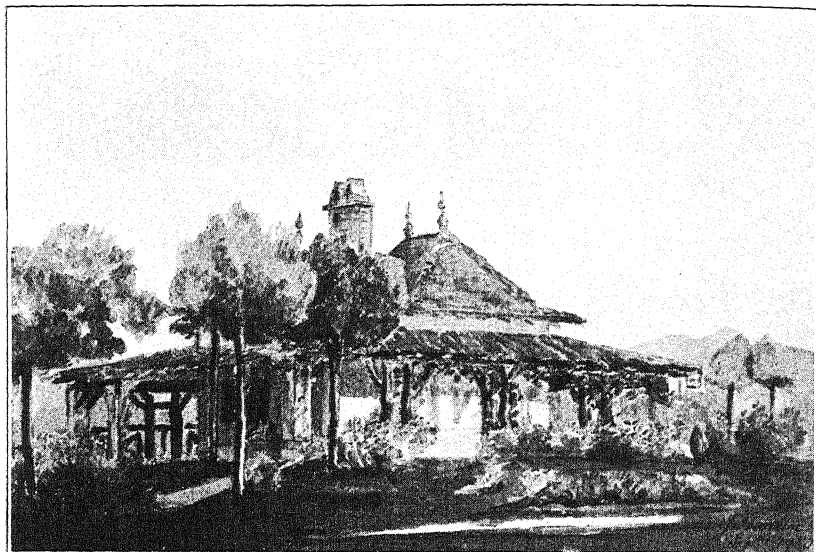
Frances Helen Hoff



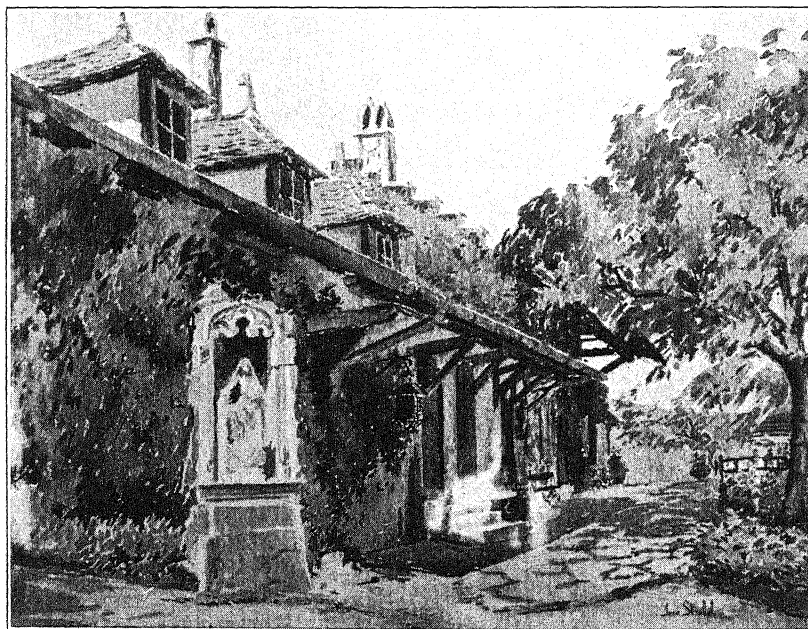
ENTRANCE TO 'CHANUT,' WAR WIDOWS' REST HOME, PEYRIEU



MRS. HOFF
1914



'Hilltop' Tea House



Statue of Saint Catherine of Alexandria
'CHANUT, WAR WIDOWS' REST HOME, PEYRIEU



À Madame Steinhilber
à la suite de la guerre, F. Foch
à Paris, 203 rue de Valenciennes.

LE MARECHAL FOCH



'CHANUT' AS MRS. HOFF FOUND IT
Mrs. Hoff at right



MRS. HOFF AND GUESTS AT 'CHANUT,' WAR WIDOWS'
REST HOME, PEYRIEU

one enters through a door with wrought-iron knocker and elaborate hinges. At one corner of the house stands an old stone image of Saint Catherine of Alexandria in its weather-beaten shrine, casting a benediction over the place.

Within the house in some magic way Mrs. Hoff has created an air of mellowness. The furnishings have been chosen with the thought of artistic beauty, the rustic Bressane style prevailing, yet with every possible comfort being assured.

Just before Chanut was opened, Mrs. Hoff placed a guest-book on the table that each one might write her name before departing. In her own hand it bore the accompanying inscription.

The Rest Home for Students, Le Moulin (Old Mill), was of a different type from Chanut. This old mill, which had been a landmark in the region since the fifteenth century, formed the nucleus for Le Moulin Rest Home. The old millstone is preserved in the building and about it a dining-room has been ingeniously constructed. Now, as *les Moulinistes* serve tea at more formal receptions or intimate gatherings, the guests often see the old wooden water-wheel turning in the river Gland, moving like a ghostly reminder of the days that are gone.

The exterior of Le Moulin presents a picture of great loveliness. Wide lawns and ivy-covered walls, terraces, shrubs, and flower-beds harmonize into an exquisite whole. Paths through the park invite the girls to walks and art students find sketching material at every turn.

Le Moulin was opened for part of the season in 1922, and the eleven guests who enjoyed its hospitality could not be enthusiastic enough over its delights. The cool bedrooms were arranged as if for special guests. Breakfast on a dainty tray came to them in their rooms. Within doors and without they were surrounded by flowers. If they dis-

covered a beautiful view, there was sure to be a garden chair awaiting them there. Best of all no hampering rules interfered with their perfect relaxation or brought the breath of an institution into this paradise. Everything bore out the words Mrs. Hoff had written on the first page of Le Moulin guest-book. (See on opposite page.)

It is small wonder that the girls felt sad on the day of departure. Yet, as one of them wrote in the guest-book, 'To leave with a soul full of memories is not to leave, but to stay singing with the water which turns the wheel of Le Moulin.'

Those who were first invited to Peyrieu could hardly believe the good fortune that had come their way. The project was unique. A month's vacation was offered to them without cost, as even railroad fares were paid. The proudest of them found friendliness without a trace of charity awaiting them. Instead of being the recipients of a great favor, they were the guests of a thoughtful and charming hostess. One of the first guests was none other than Madame Bizolon, the War heroine. Everything delighted her and most of all to be near her dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Hoff. Yet one thing seemed very strange. When her *petit déjeuner* was brought to her in bed or tea in the garden, she would protest, 'I am not accustomed to being waited upon. I always serve.'

While Chanut was devoted primarily to French War Widows and their daughters, Le Moulin welcomed girls of any country who were studying or working in France. A number of French organizations under the supervision of the wife of Maréchal Foch and military centers, as well as individuals, recommended the guests for Chanut.

During the ten years since Le Moulin opened its doors, seventeen nationalities have rested and played there harmoniously. And there, as at Chanut, Protestant, Roman

Le Moulins Guest-Book

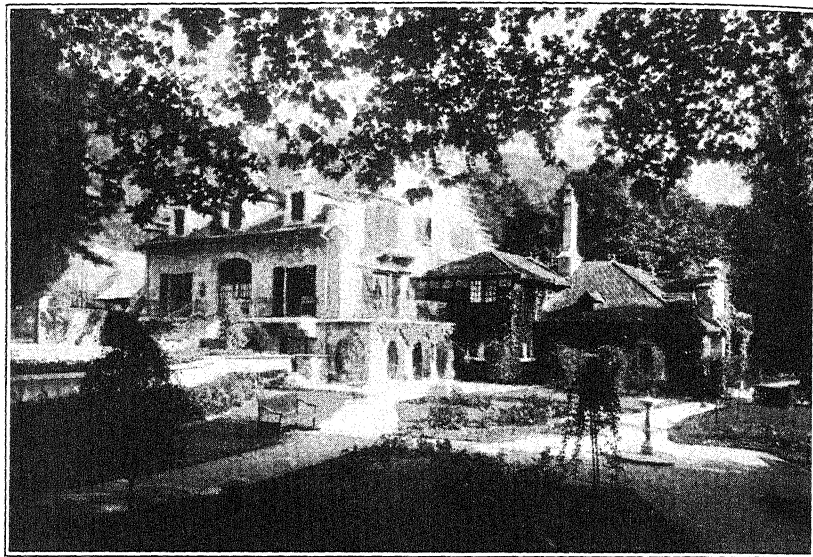
Foreword

Love, joy, peace, long suffering,
gentleness by goodness create the
perfect-home.

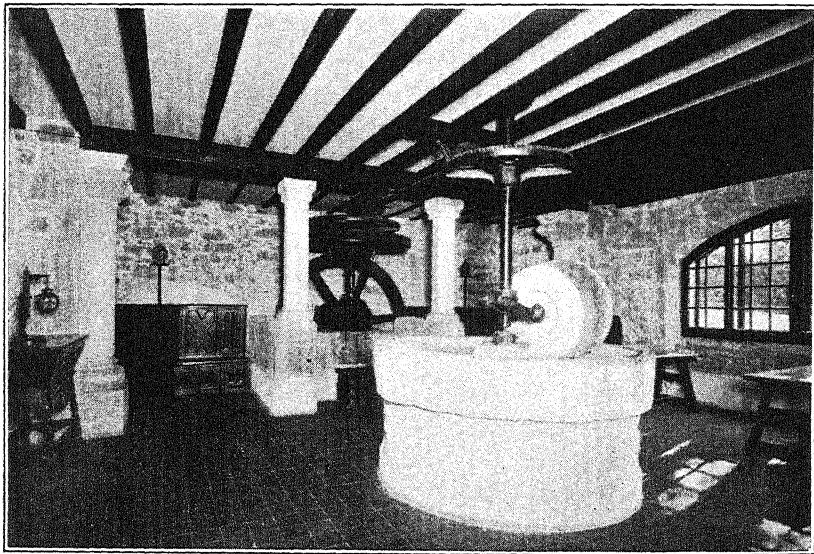
Aimez vous reciproquement - d'une
affection tendre et fraternele.

Soyez joyeux dans l'esperance
 Yours in the bond of service

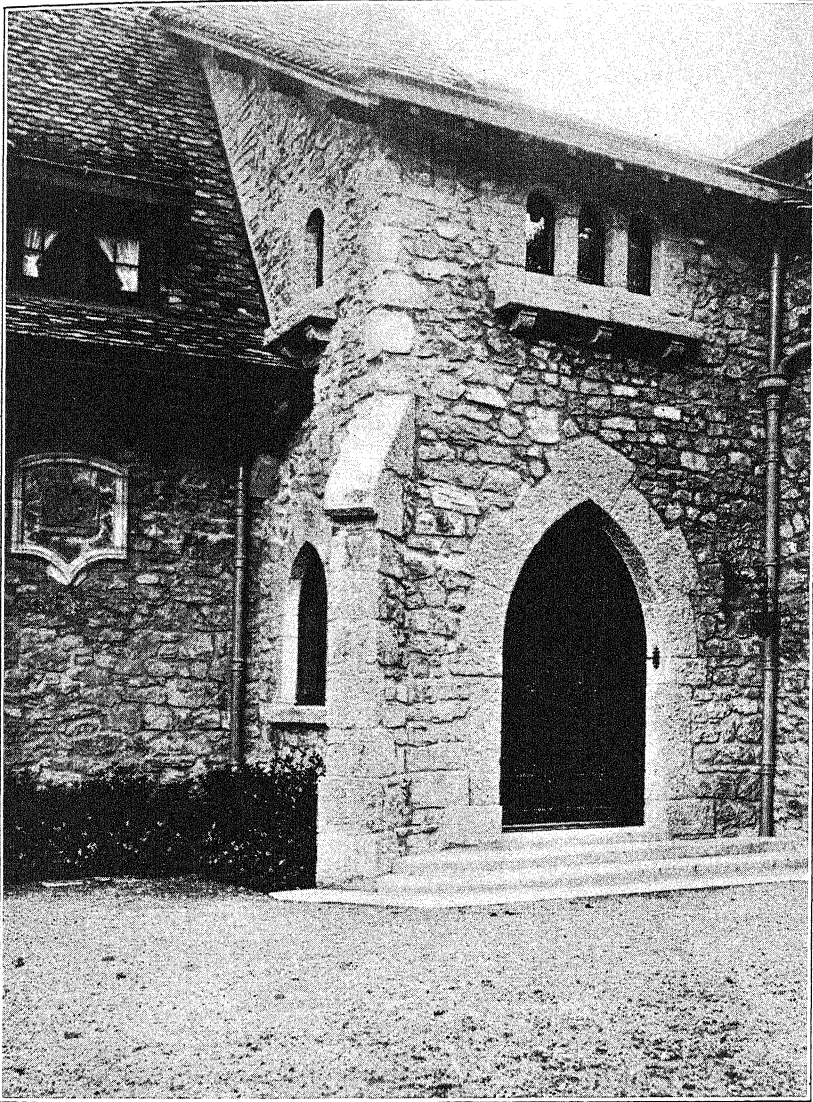
Francis Henry Hoff



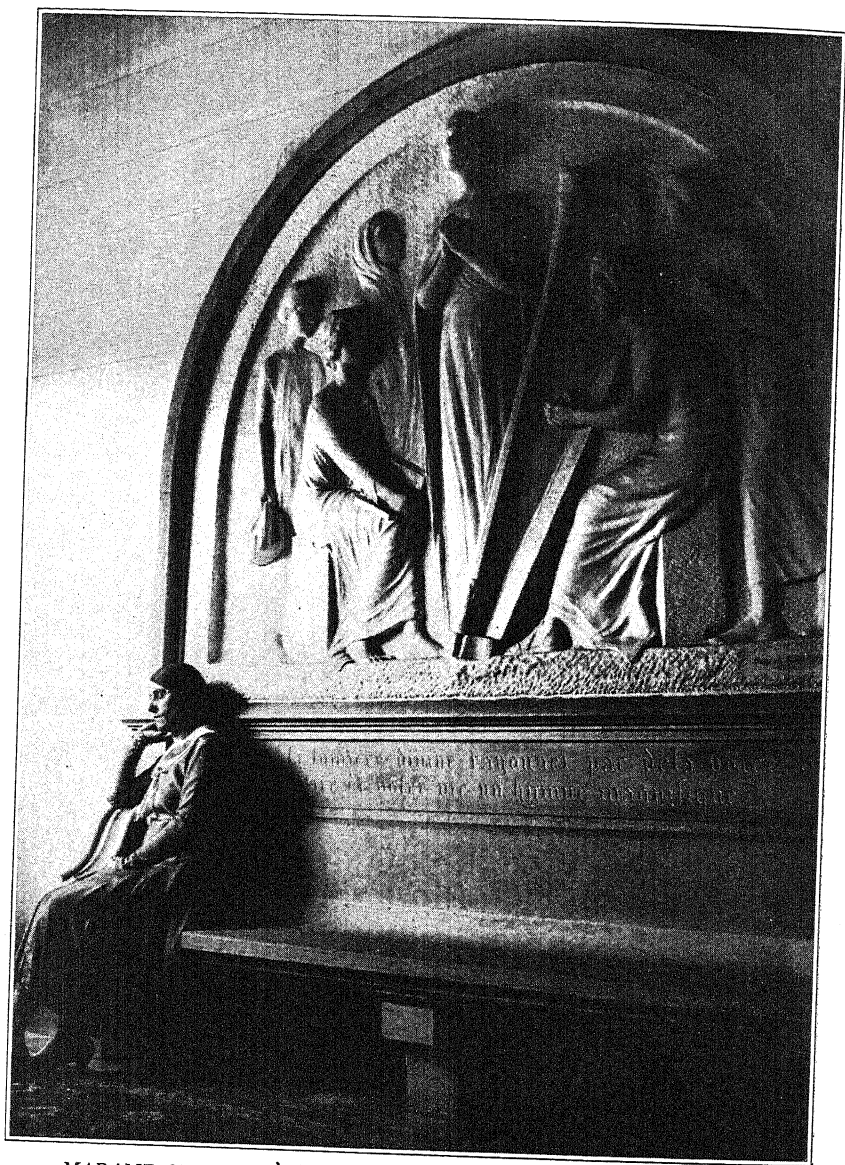
Rest Home



Old millstone that ground the corn for centuries
'LE MOULIN'



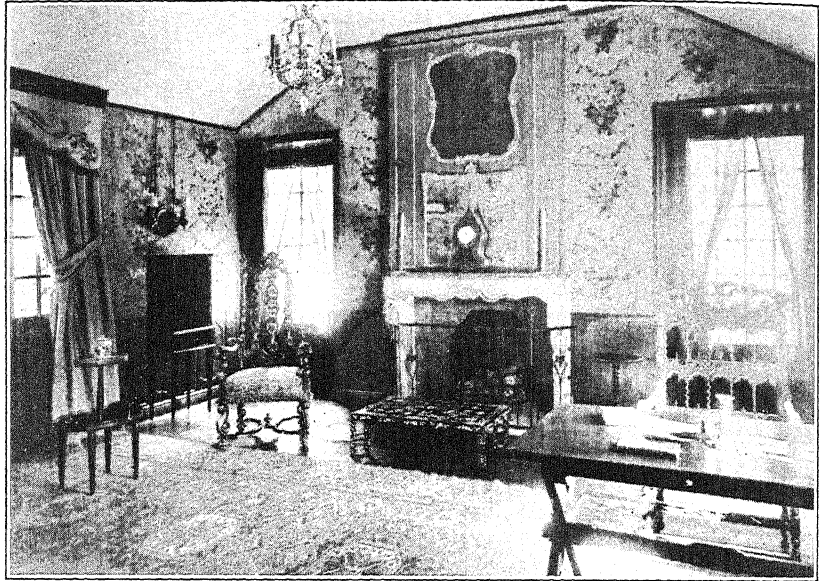
ENTRANCE TO THE BUNGALOW AT 'LE MOULIN' REST HOME



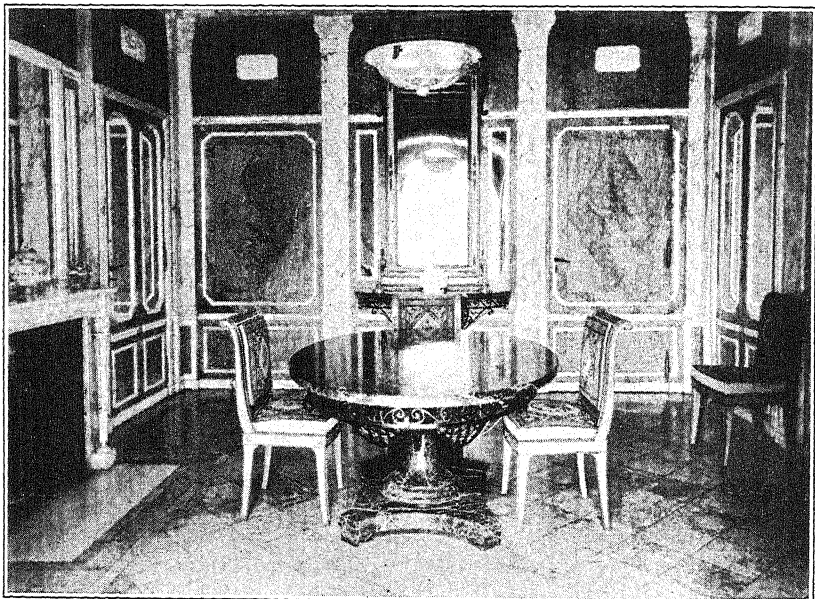
MADAME GIRARDET'S BAS-RELIEF AT 'LE MOULIN' REST HOME



MRS. HOFF
1923



Mr. Hoff's office



Dining-room

THE BUNGALOW, 'LE MOULIN' REST HOME

Catholic, and those without religious connection have shared alike its joys.

Those who go to the Peyrieu Rest Homes cannot but feel themselves the personal guests of Mr. and Mrs. Hoff. Several times a week the host and hostess drop in upon them. Sometimes they chat together in groups and sometimes the talk is more personal. Often there is an excursion to be planned or experiences from the day before to be recounted, when tea may be served in the old mill room at Le Moulin, or at Hilltop at Chanut.

On the Moulin grounds not far from the ancient Roman bridge which crosses the Gland River, stands the Marble Bungalow. Lapped gently by the river, it is used by the *châtelains* as a retiring place, where they find rest and seclusion, sometimes for only an hour or two, and sometimes for several days. Besides a dining-room, kitchen, and bedrooms, it contains a large music-room, where once a month Mrs. Hoff receives her neighbors, châteaux residents for a radius of many miles, and her friends from Aix-les-Bains, Geneva, Lyons, and Grenoble. An exquisite musical programme, sometimes furnished by the Rest Home guests, is always a part of the entertainment, for these guests often include many *premier prix de conservatoire*. Here the grand piano, as well as the organ in the Moulin proper, is for the use of the guests.

In Mr. Hoff's private room are already housed two great treasures, the tin box used for collecting money at the Lyons station during War days and the knife used by Madame Bizolon for cutting bread for hundreds of thousands of soldiers.

One excursion which the guests take every month is to Aix-les-Bains. Comfortable motors carry them across the mountains which conceal Aix from the château, over a magnificent mountain road known as Hannibal's Pass and the Col du Chat. In the famous resort they visit the

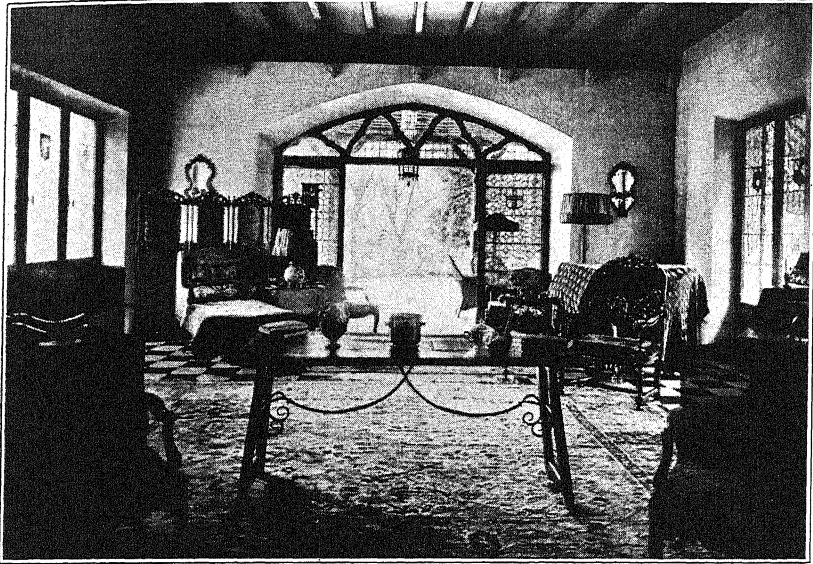
historical monuments and the shops, enjoy a refreshing luncheon, and then ride home again to the beauty and peace of Peyrieu.

During their holiday the groups spend delightful afternoons at the château, visiting the grounds so exquisitely planned by France's greatest landscape gardeners, the detached buildings which include the Guest Building, Rustic Fête Halls (the scene of many gatherings each year). Some guests linger over the rare books in the cloister, some hover near the tapestries, or the collection of laces, embroideries, and old silks. Unconsciously, as they walk through the beautiful castle, they reveal their special personal interests.

For tea they gather in the stately *Cour d'Honneur*, where the table is spread with dainties. This scene remains in their memories as one of the choicest experiences of their sojourn. Many kilometers of the Rhone Valley lie unfolded before them, and it adds to the romance of that moment to be told that just behind one of the mountains is the pass where Hannibal crossed the Alps.

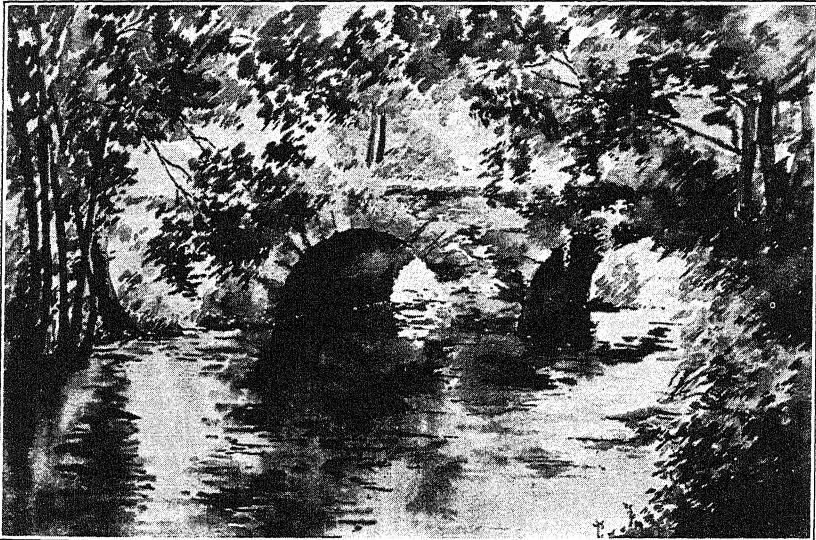
With the taste of a true music-lover, Mrs. Hoff arranges delightful programmes for these monthly teas. As a parting gift each guest receives a book written by Mrs. Hoff for her friends. 'A Message for Today,' printed in both French and English, contains the principles that have guided her own life and the thoughts that have comforted her in times of stress. This gift is accompanied by her photograph, specially inscribed to the recipient, that when she leaves Peyrieu she may take with her some tangible evidence of the friendship that has come into her life.

At all these receptions Mr. and Mrs. Hoff stand at the château entrance to receive their guests and again for farewell as the party leaves. Once only was Mrs. Hoff unable to play the active hostess. In June, 1929, the exhaustion following a strenuous winter forced her to

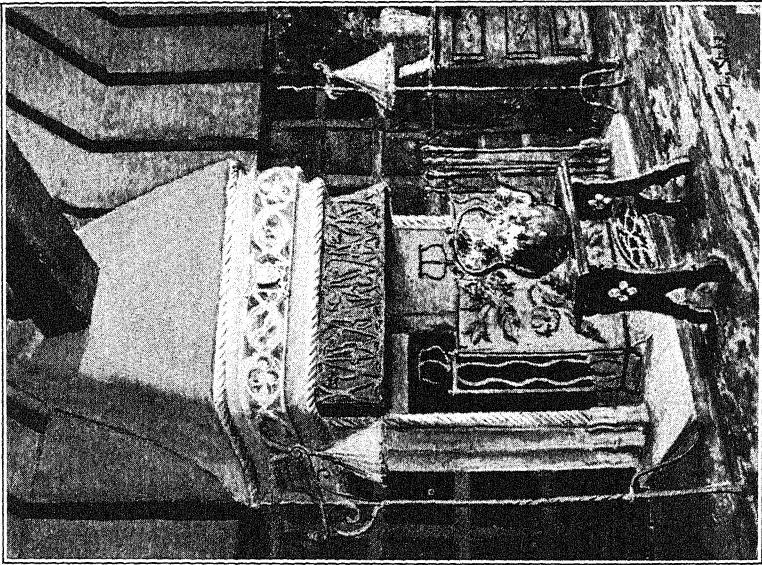


Music-room

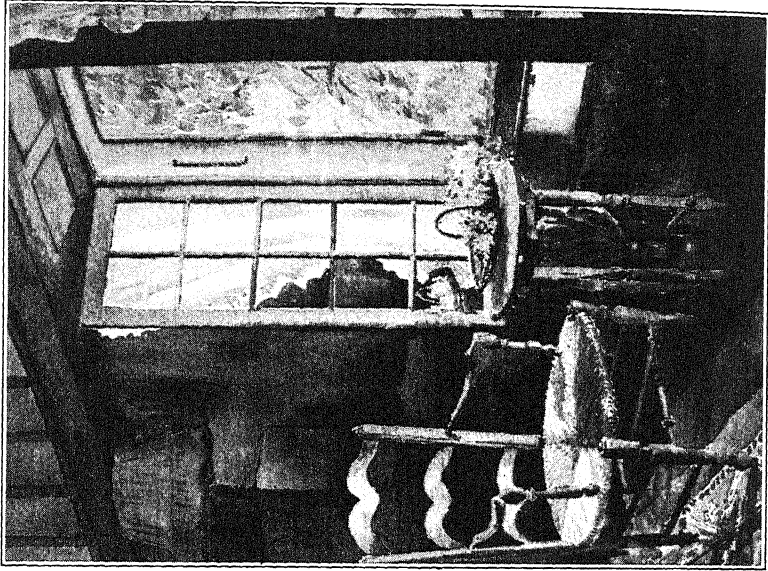
THE BUNGALOW AT 'LE MOULIN' REST HOME



ROMAN BRIDGE OVER THE GLAND RIVER, 'LE MOULIN' REST HOME



Fireplace, Salon



Guest-Room

'CHANUT', WAR WIDOWS' REST HOME, PEYRIEU

receive her guests seated in her salon. But the welcome was just as cordial and the smiling face bore no sign of the weakness which she felt.

When the whole month has passed and the time comes to say good-bye, some of those who have tasted Mrs. Hoff's goodness cry as if their hearts would break. They have never found such a friend before. To some of them she appears almost a saint, but when they try to kiss her hand, she stoops immediately and kisses them on the cheek. Then they see that she is not a saint, but a mother.

Their hearts would be less sad when they leave Peyrieu if they could only realize that between them and Mrs. Hoff a link has been forged forever, that she never forgets them and that she never fails them. They have become a part of a family that never grows too large for cords of love to hold it together. As Mrs. Hoff wrote to a friend, 'The guests at the Rest Homes change each month and my family grows and my heart correspondingly increases in size, but each one has her place.'

Every year as Easter and the date for opening Le Moulin and Chanut approaches, the *châtelaine* watches the weather anxiously. In one letter she wrote, 'We are sending a group of guests to the Rest Homes, which open next week, and I keep my eyes fixed on the barometer, longing for better days so that they may live out-of-doors.' The homes are well heated so that all are cozy and comfortable whatever the weather, but their hostess is always disappointed when the conditions are not such as will benefit her guests the most.

The Rest Homes open before the arrival of the *châtelains* at Peyrieu, but they are eager to be there, for the occupations of city life do not attract them as do the joys of country life, chief among which are personal contacts. Of all these relationships Mrs. Hoff writes, 'This makes my family a large one, but no life enters mine that does

not bring something to stimulate and encourage greater effort, and personal contact is the vital power.'

The girls, too, grow to feel that they have entered a loving sisterhood when they find that their first letters of gratitude for the month of rest and refreshment which she has given them are answered with a message of overflowing kindness. Once assured of her continuing interest, they write to her of all their joys and sorrows, of approaching marriage, of the death of a loved one, and ask her counsel when faced with perplexity. To each letter comes an answer by return mail.

Another bond which holds them all together is a reunion held in Paris each winter. Here they meet old friends and make new ones. They see once more their dearest friend of all, and renew their happy acquaintance with the two women Mrs. Hoff has chosen for resident hostesses at Chanut and Le Moulin. Mademoiselle Talbot, a distinguished French lady, presides over Chanut. Le Moulin hostess is none other than Miss Lous, of the old Student Hostel, in Paris. A good fairy, she has been called, who gives a little of her heart to all who have suffered.

What the Rest Homes have actually meant can only be told by a glimpse into the letters which Mrs. Hoff receives in almost every mail. The gratitude expressed in a great number of ways is always touching.

One guest could hardly put her appreciation into words. She had been a promising young concert singer when, suddenly and inexplicably, she lost her voice. At the thought of the struggle she had made to win a place in the musical world and of the career which seemed shattered and in ruins, her soul became almost bitter. Then she was invited to Peyrieu. In that healing atmosphere she relaxed utterly. The Marble Bungalow with its grand piano renewed the longings that she was now trying to forget, yet she was almost happy again in that lovely spot. One

day a miracle happened — her voice came back in all its golden beauty, restored to her by the balm of Peyrieu. She felt as if Mrs. Hoff had made her a gift of life itself.

Another guest, a widow who supported herself by sewing, said that in all her life she had never met with such care and comfort. The day after she left Peyrieu she went to church and had a mass read for her *bienfaiteurs*.

Another girl writes: 'I arrived broken with fatigue. I had never felt such weariness and lassitude, and, after a little more than three weeks, thanks to this atmosphere of calm, of affection, all that you have arranged with such unrivaled art for repose and rest, I have regained my physical and moral strength. I am ready to begin another year of labor which before had seemed impossible to me.'

Frequently mothers join in their daughters' thanks for that unforgettable month in the country. 'This welcome sojourn,' writes one widowed mother, 'during which J. has been received with such delicate solicitude, will remain for her one of the finest memories of her sad youth, and will have been a sweet ray of sunshine.'

Among the nationalities entertained at Le Moulin, next to the French in numbers come the expatriated Russians. These tragic outcasts have won a special place in Mrs. Hoff's heart, and they who have lost everything can hardly believe in her goodness until they have experienced it. Their wonder and gratitude know no bounds. One of them marvels at the unceasing care she gives to her guests. 'Never mind that most of them are at present in quite different conditions of life from your own, that they live only with the remembrance of past golden days. You are always ready to consider them as your own friends just as if you met them accidentally and not that your constant wish to relieve people sent you to them. I never met anyone so invariably kind and so thoughtful to people in their sorrow as you are.'

'*Les Moulinistes* go away uplifted and many among them have had for the first time the revelation of a life where personal happiness is not the only goal,' wrote another.

A widowed music teacher who was struggling to give her young daughter the advantages of an education in Paris wrote after her visit to Chanut: 'I noticed all the furniture and the way it was chosen for us, because it was not too rich to impress us and not too poor to make us regret our home.' She said that knowing Mrs. Hoff made it easy to do good to others, and as a final tribute she added, 'I notice the people around Mrs. Hoff are chosen by a woman who knows people. She is very clever. She has a brain and she has a heart and she knows the heart of other people.'

The greatest delight to Mrs. Hoff is that many who return to the workaday world from the Rest Homes have found that their purpose in life has been elevated to an ideal, and that they pass on to others a little of what they have received. Some of them have been able to start a rest home of their own in the country, modeled after the one at Peyrieu where they gained repose.

As the members of her Rest Home family drift into different corners of France or back to their own countries, Mrs. Hoff follows them in her thoughts. Feeling that she cannot reach them all personally, she sends them from time to time a printed letter. The first of these was dated November, 1926, just before a journey of several months to America:

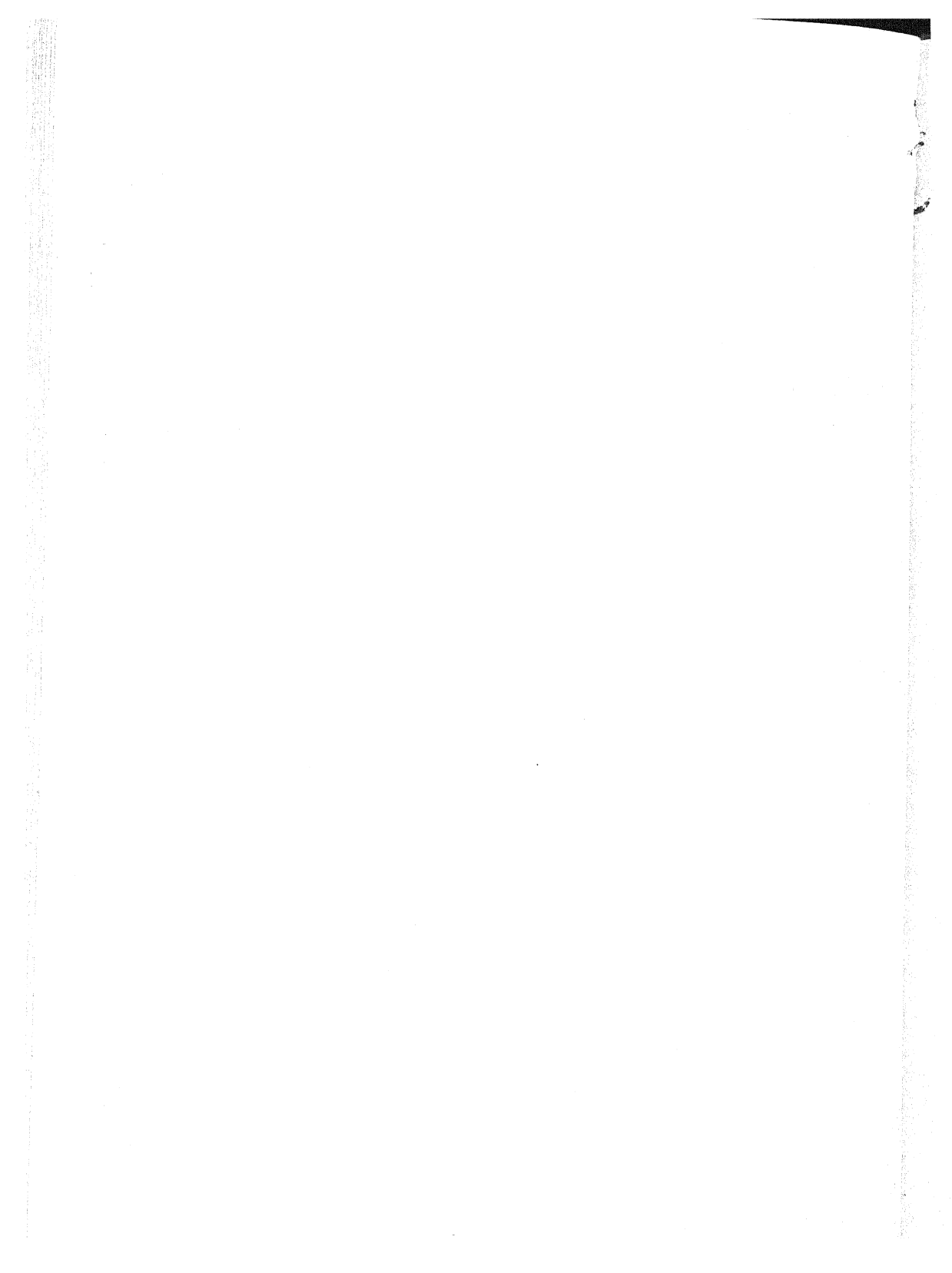
To our Family of 'Le Moulin' and 'Chanut'

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

Our family has grown so large that it is almost impossible for me to write to each one of you personally. Nevertheless not a day passes but one or another of you is present in my thoughts, in my heart and in my prayers.



ANNUAL REUNION OF REST HOME GUESTS AT THE FOYER INTERNA-
TIONAL DES ETUDIANTES



So I have decided to send you from time to time a letter, an affectionate message, to assure you of my tender feeling and fond recollection of the happy days we have spent together.

In these dwellings where we met as a family, we formed precious friendships and learned the value of human affection; perhaps there, too, we discovered the need of a greater love, the love of God, our Father.

His love will never fail us. Sometimes weary and discouraged, closing our eyes to worldly vanities, we have experienced a sacred moment when our hearts yearned for the closest communion with all that is high, pure and beautiful. Then, in a glorious vision, we were shown the possibilities of a better life, the revelation that we must no longer live for ourselves but for the service of humanity.

How insignificant now appear those things which we thought necessary to our happiness, those earthly goods we coveted, compared to the spiritual blessings we have gained: the realization of our own frailty and of the omnipotence of God who uses us to accomplish His work.

Let us not lend a complacent ear to the flatteries of the world, nor attach importance to its judgments; let us rather listen to the voice of our Father and strive to do His will, putting our lives in harmony with His divine laws. From the depths of the valley of doubt and despair, where we struggle in the shadows, let us lift up our eyes to the peaks glowing in the morning light — and climb towards them.

Come with me, dear friends, along the banks of the stream which bathes our beloved Moulin, admire the beautiful trees reflected in its ever-changing waters, hear its sweet song of peace and rest. Climb with me the slope of laughing Chanut, look on the distant mountains which shut out from us the cares and labors of life. And, moved by the grandeur of these works of God, we shall ask, 'What human hand could have created all these treasures, unfailing source of blessed memories?'

On leaving these enchanting spots, some have gone with hearts full of sacred ardor, resolved henceforth to seek the finest and noblest things of life. They will not forget this experience; it is the first step on the road which leads to the heights.

The sweet summer sunshine has gone, the nightingales in the star-lit skies — and the hardships of winter await us. But we shall not fear the icy blasts, the threatening skies, if we keep

before our eyes the glowing vision of happy days gone by. And when, in our journey, we encounter others for whom the horizon is overcast, we will share with them the joy and hope which we have gathered in those moments of happiness, and point out to them the rift in the clouds where tomorrow the sun will break through.

Dear friends, I keep you in my heart, in my thoughts and in my prayers. I rejoice when, in your lives, the shadows pass and the sun of joy shines down. But if you languish yet in the vale of sorrow, or the clouds of despair hide from you the vision of the new life, I shall think of you more tenderly still and shall pray God to awake in you confidence in His infinite mercy.

The winter months will bring together some of the members of our great family, but others, alas! have been called to labor in distant countries. Though an ocean rolls between us, friendship creates a bond which nothing can destroy; each life is a link in the infinite chain forged by God's love.

Affectionately yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Grace Whitney Hoff". The signature is written in dark ink and features a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the bottom that extends across the width of the name.

CHAPTER II

THE ART OF GIVING

AFTER the War was over, the Rest Homes for the War Widows, their daughters, for students, and self-supporting women might have held a central place in Mrs. Hoff's life, had she been less vigorous, had her impulse to service been less urgent. If she had allowed Chanut and Le Moulin to absorb her interest to the exclusion of other things, she would still have had a secure place as a philanthropist in France. But her distinction lies partly in the unceasingness, in the multiplicity, of her kindly acts. 'Be not weary in well doing' are words which she never needed to hear spoken.

She knows the life of her adopted city as few know it. Many women think they are becoming familiar with the great capital when they walk through the Place Vendôme and down the Rue de la Paix, or ride along the Champs Elysées into the Bois de Boulogne; and so they are, in their own way. Like the students, diplomats, and epicures that roam its streets, they are learning to know the Paris that interests them.

'But do you know the Paris behind the walls?' Mrs. Hoff once asked a group of friends in New York. 'Do you know the tenement section where ten out of fifteen are touched with tuberculosis? Do you know of the mother girls in Paris who are never allowed the joy of home life, the prisons, the life of the woman wage-earner, the discouraged, the confused and helpless?'

To Mrs. Hoff, Place Vendôme is something more than a circle of imposing façades, banking centers, fascinating shops of feminine luxuries, to tempt the purse of the passing stranger. Close to the famous and fashionable Hôtel

Ritz, there lived a *concierge* with a numerous family, occupying the dark, sunless, unhealthy quarters that are allotted to the guardians of France's most beautiful buildings. One of this interesting family, a young girl employed in a milliner's shop, drew Mrs. Hoff's attention — her pale face, the haunted expression, the frail body touched the mother heart — and, whispering a word of sympathetic understanding, she asked permission to give to this girl a holiday in the great open country of Peyrieu, where the mountains, flowers, songs of birds, and life-giving air would bring back the strength so needed for the struggle of life.

Like a bird liberated from a cage, this beautiful girl found health. She absorbed the personality of her benefactor, and the spirit of universal helpfulness now characterizes her life as she moves among those who need the vital powers of one who has suffered and has been victorious.

This incident is only one example of many. The variety of Mrs. Hoff's contacts is amazing. Spare moments that would be claimed for leisure by another person, she fills with visits or messages to the sick, the dying, the bereaved. Those who are sad or lonely, she never forgets, and no anniversary, leave-taking, or home-coming among her acquaintances goes by without an evidence of her thoughtfulness.

The greater part of her correspondence is devoted to the interests of others. Every newspaper and magazine that comes into her home is mailed to someone as soon as the household has read it, and oftener than not it is wrapped and addressed by her own deft fingers. There are artists and artisans alike who have found the path to success through her recommendations; and her letters of introduction have smoothed the way for strangers in many parts of the world.

The daily reception hour which she first set aside in Detroit was soon established in Paris and has been continued with scrupulous care throughout the years. Every afternoon her salon is filled with the sick, the poor, the 'disinherited' of every description, and often twenty or thirty daily avail themselves of the open sesame to this friendly heart.

Mrs. Hoff has said that the sight of those waiting faces is the greatest power in her life. These people come feeling that they are going to find something that will uplift them, if only the spoken word, and no one goes away unsatisfied. When wonder is expressed at the sustaining force of her mere presence, she smiles quietly; only her intimates know that she never crosses a threshold where someone awaits her without breathing a prayer that God will help her to reveal new possibilities and to say the needed word.

Among the recipients of her kindness, she recognizes no line of race or creed. She believes that any human relationship can be made constructive, and she never abandons a case as beyond hope. The first impression of her giving of self, means, and sympathy might be that she is indiscriminate, but, on the contrary, no one knows better than she how much wisdom and restraint true philanthropy requires.

It is not the recipient of her gift that Mrs. Hoff scrutinizes, but the method of giving and the time. As her friend, Mademoiselle de Teincey, lady-in-waiting to the Duchesse de Vendôme, sister to the King of Belgium, once said: 'She knows how to give help at the critical moment, and it is that charming side of her genius which characterizes her bounty.'

How many times has unexpected help arrived as if in answer to prayer! Through experience of continuous sympathy for mankind, she has learned to see a need

where others see none, and to foresee, as if by inspiration, the critical moment.

The holiday season is Mrs. Hoff's busiest time, for she does not forget that the New Year, which means joy to some, 'to others ushers in another year of burden-bearing and want.'

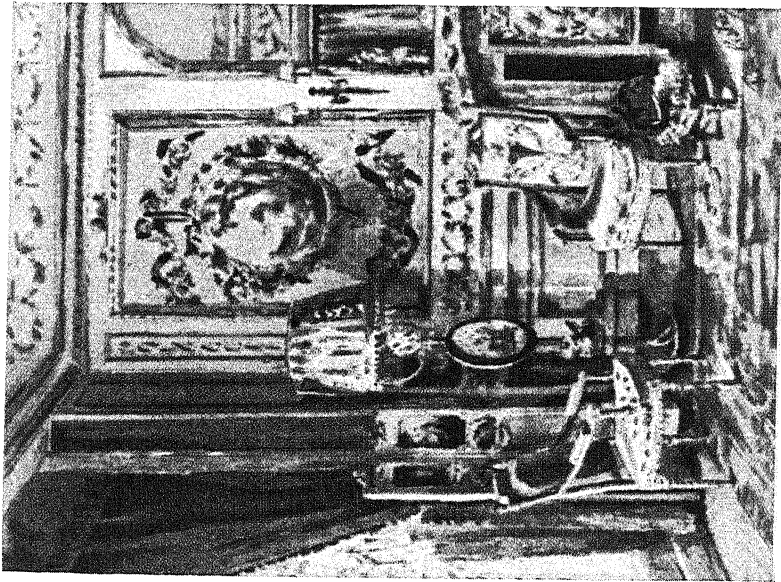
First there are numberless personal remembrances to be prepared in advance; not a relative, a friend, or a servant in the various homes and organizations is forgotten.

Then come elaborate plans for the festivities in the villages surrounding her two country homes, neighboring schools and hospitals, the Rest Homes, and organizations in the city of Paris.

There are gifts and messages to be distributed in Lyons by her representative, Madame Bizolon, who, as self-appointed almoner of Christmas cheer among the mutilated soldiers, visits hospital bedsides and homes that might otherwise be forgotten.

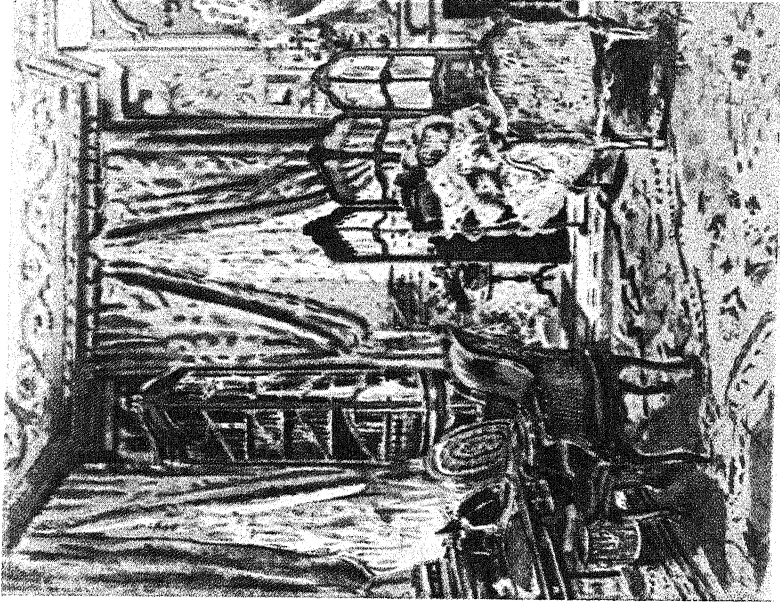
In Paris there is the *fête de Noël* for the *grands blessés*. Mrs. Hoff has taken special interest in those maimed heroes of France who were not called upon to make the supreme sacrifice, but who were left as living witnesses to the horror of war. In one corner of the great Hôtel des Invalides, under the shadow of Napoleon's tomb, is the National Hospital of the Invalides, which houses one hundred and fifty crippled officers and soldiers. In spite of their handicaps, these men have become master craftsmen in various arts. Near the dormitories is the great dome where these crippled heroes assemble to listen to programmes of music rendered by their own members, and often the greatest artists of music and drama give of their talents.

From time to time during the year, Mrs. Hoff brings beauty and joy into the lives of these *grands blessés* with her visits, distributing carefully chosen books and



Petit Salon where Mrs. Hoff receives during her daily 'reception hour' for the 'disinherited'

CHRISTMAS CARDS CHOSEN FROM THOSE SENT ANNUALLY BY MRS. HOFF TO HER FRIENDS FOR MORE THAN FORTY YEARS



Mrs. Hoff's desk in her room on Avenue Foch overlooking the Bois de Boulogne



flowers. But the peak of their enjoyment comes at the Christmas party, with its personal gifts for each one, which her generosity makes possible.

Still others whom she remembers are groups of homeless children on the outskirts of Paris, who have no other celebration than that provided by charity. The aid which she gives to those in charge enables them to carry out a programme of physical and educational development.

On Mrs. Hoff's *bienfaisance* list are the Grace Whitney Hoff Free Kindergarten in Hiroshima, Japan, and the Grace Whitney Hoff Solarium attached to the day nursery in Aix-les-Bains.

The Kindergarten of Hiroshima, Japan, is located in a section of the city where it is said the natives once signed a pledge in blood that they would never rent or sell property to a Christian. When it was opened, the Japanese were afraid to trust their children there even for a day, but now the whole community calls it the 'Children's Paradise.'

The greatest pleasure in Mrs. Hoff's life is to hear that those whom she has helped are in turn helping others. It was a delight, therefore, when the directress in Hiroshima wrote that even her kindergarten children were learning the lesson of unselfishness. Although they often go hungry themselves when their parents are out of work, they have gladly saved the half-penny that would buy food for their lunch in order to help the aged members of their homes.

Through the Kindergarten Mrs. Hoff also became interested in a little crippled boy whom she calls Emi San. While at the hospital he began to study the violin, although forced to play lying on his back because of the cast he was wearing; after he went home, Mrs. Hoff arranged for instruction under a competent teacher. By doing this, she not only granted the dearest desire of Emi

San's heart, but she helped a Russian refugee of culture and talent, who was endeavoring to support his family by teaching music.

Emi San has now learned English, and he can thank his benefactor in her own language. A devoted Christian, he has written that through her kindness, that of a friend whom he has never seen, he can understand the love of his Heavenly Father.

When Mrs. Hoff was asked to speak at a Children's Refuge in Orly, on the outskirts of Paris, in 1928, her address revealed the depth of her affection for children, and paid a tribute to all those who are engaged in serving them. 'The one who removes a tear from the face of a child,' she said, 'and brings back happiness to the small heart has a right to the name of mother.'

How many times and in how many ways she herself has played the part of a mother! People who were entrusted to her care even before she left Detroit have not been crowded out by the activities of more than thirty years of residence abroad.

A blind girl in America is very close to her heart; faithful comforting visits to the hospital marked the beginning of their friendship, and through decisive operations Grace Whitney did not leave the girl's side. During the long convalescence, while the girl faced life under the limitations of blindness, she sent her carriage every day to have the invalid taste God's life-giving air. The recipient of her care has said: 'A mother could have come no closer. In all her years in Paris I have not failed to have a letter at least twice a month and material support has never failed.... Her letters are full of her everyday life, to make me feel that I am with her every day.'

Another woman, a cripple, is a heritage from even earlier days, from the president of Hellmuth College. A girl who had lost a leg was without resources or friends.

A succession of the best artificial limbs supplied by her benefactor enabled her to lead an active and happy life. She married and became the mother of four children. The oldest is named Grace, for the child's mother can never forget what she owes to the friend whose watchful interest in the little home has never wavered.

Mrs. Hoff once wrote to this brave woman: 'I feel honored that you give me the title of mother. That seems to be my rôle in life.'

Another cripple owes much to Mrs. Hoff. Through her influence he obtained a position in Detroit which has enabled him to provide for himself. By giving him access to the library at the Whitney home and encouraging him to read, she has changed not only his taste in literature, but his outlook on life. An even greater influence came from a Bible which she once brought to him from France.

'I had owned other Bibles,' he said, 'but they never meant anything to me. But when she gave me this one and asked me to read it, I did from cover to cover and learned to love it. Thus was created in me a desire to read something from the Bible every day. I found Mrs. Hoff had marked many pages for my personal help.'

Nor are her philanthropic activities confined to French and Americans alone. During the early years of the British-American Young Women's Christian Association, a girl from Scotland drifted in as an *externe* member. Having been born in Russia, although her father was a Scot, she was subjected to some investigation, but being assisted by the organization, she succeeded in straightening matters out. Later she went to the United States as the personal companion of an American woman, following which she became secretary to Mark Twain at his home in Connecticut. A short time after the death of the humorist, she was stricken with chronic arthritis, and removed to a hospital in New

Jersey, where Mrs. Hoff located her by means of newspaper articles she had written about Mark Twain. Mrs. Hoff placed her in a hospital in New York. Here much encouragement was given by the attending physicians, and the young woman improved sufficiently to be able to take a few steps without the aid of crutches. For years Mrs. Hoff has cared for her, sending her from one hospital or sanatorium to another in search of a cure, and though ultimate improvement in her case seems doubtful, Mrs. Hoff has not relaxed her efforts. Throughout these years she has followed the matter with great personal interest, writing encouraging letters, sparing neither time nor money, for it is characteristic of her philanthropy that she never forsakes those in whom she once interests herself.

Another example of her interest over a long period concerns the Nevski family. A mother, daughter, and younger son — the family of a Russian general in the Czar's army — had fled from Russia during the Revolution. Their plight was desperate. The son was tubercular and the mother supported the family largely by dress-making. Then one morning the newspapers carried a paragraph reporting the suicide of the daughter, an art student, because of an unhappy love affair. She had formerly assisted the mother by designing gowns, and now the mother's situation was even more desperate. An eminent American writer, temporarily in Paris, brought the situation to Mrs. Hoff's attention. At once she set about helping the mother and son. The latter, then in a sanatorium in Switzerland, was provided with comforts he had formerly lacked. Books and journals of his own choice were dispatched to him, and letters of encouragement. Meanwhile, Mrs. Hoff enabled the mother in Paris to earn a better living. Under the influence of Mrs. Hoff both have come to look upon the daughter's

remorseful lover with forgiveness. The boy's letters are full of appreciation for his benefactor, and reflect his new courage and hope for the future.

One of the most interesting lives that Mrs. Hoff has touched is that of Dr. Janet Miller, the American girl who endeared herself to the Japanese in Hiroshima, and then answered the call to a lonely sun-beaten post in Central Africa. She is the author of 'Jungles Preferred,' which she dedicated to Mrs. Hoff, the history of her service as medical missionary, where she treated sleeping sickness with marked results.

After a journey of four months and two days, she described to Mrs. Hoff how she had penetrated the heart of the dark continent. 'I dreaded coming,' she concluded; 'I went through months of agony, praying daily to be "delivered from this task," but now that I have arrived, I am supremely happy to be here... anyone could have done it, *but the call came to me.*'

As her thoughts went back to happy days in the past, she always spoke of the Student Hostel in Paris as she remembered it. 'It was a dear place in days gone by!'

After two years of difficult but well-earned service, she was about to set her face homeward when a check from Mrs. Hoff reached her, to be used for her personal pleasure. In reply Dr. Miller wrote:

I have a cherished wish I could not fulfill but for this check and shall carry out this desire before I go out of Africa. In all non-Christian countries the lot of women is pitifully hard; but in this benighted land it is degraded beyond anything I have ever known in any other land. When of marriageable age, a girl is sold for a goat or two goats. She belongs absolutely to her husband as do also the children she bears. When she is young and strong, she makes certain demands upon her husband. One is that she shall have a *dehondo* to wear. This is a sort of robe four feet wide and about six feet long which she drapes around her. These *dehondos* are brought in by

Portuguese traders and traded for ivory and wild rubber to the natives. One rarely sees a young woman without clothing. Not so old women. There is no more painful sight than these old decrepit bodies, bent with years of toil, great muscle tumors on the back from hard work in carrying loads — absolutely naked. Rheumatism is the lot of every one of them, for it is very damp. The plight of these old women is constantly before me, for they are always begging me to cure their aching joints; how many times I have wanted to give each of them a nice *dehondo* to wrap around her old body, and now my chance has come through your kindness! It is a great joy, the memory of which I shall take back to my own beautiful country!

In a later letter she continues:

How I wish you could have been present on the red-letter day in the history of Minga Station. We sent out word that all the old grandmothers in the neighborhood were to come on a certain day. By dawn, the first prayer bell at 5.30 A.M., the lawn was covered with these old naked black women. It looked exactly like a vast flock of big black crows as I looked out. I had expected and prepared for fifty. When we counted them, there were eighty-one. They did not know why they were there, but they had come because the white doctor had called them and they knew she had called them for some good reason. We sent out an S.O.S. to the neighboring village *magasins*, and to each old woman I handed a lovely, bright-colored, strong, nicely woven *dehondo* which will last through life. Some of those who received them took the *dehondos* in their arms and put them up to their faces — too happy for words; others were suspicious of their good fortune and snatched them from me and ran immediately away, lest I should change my mind and take them back. I gave each *dehondo* with a lifting of my heart to God in *thanksgiving*. I *never* had greater joy in my life. I shall *never* forget that day.

Mrs. Hoff, I know you have done innumerable acts of love and kindness during your beautiful life of service to others, but I wonder if ever before you *literally* 'clothed the naked.'

As far away as Africa, then, Mrs. Hoff's charity reaches, but it also is freely extended to those in her im-

mediate vicinity. One summer, while Mrs. Hoff was at Peyrieu, she noticed during frequent motor trips into Aix-les-Bains an old lady who stood upon street-corners displaying knitted goods for sale. She interested herself in the woman, and discovered that, having lost all her relatives in the War, seven of them in one week, she was forced to earn a precarious living by knitting despite the fact that she was afflicted by rheumatism. Mrs. Hoff immediately helped to make her lot an easier one, and has continued to do so for years. Her gratitude is shown by her letters, one of which reads:

Dear Madame:

I come to thank you for what you have done for me. Without you, Madame, I think I would have reached the end. I thank you with all my heart. Also I hope that you are well, and that the good God will keep you in health in order to sustain poor unhappy ones like me, for I am much afflicted. Accept, Madame, my sincere greetings.

MADAME M— *Knitter*

I have not the strength to say more to you. Adieu, Madame.

All the people whom Mrs. Hoff has aided in any way have become a part of her own life, but none more than a friend in Paris who suffered bitter reverses in fortune and station of life and found herself abandoned by friends. A cultured woman of great beauty, the admiration of several Court centers, she was accustomed to mingling with the best English and Continental society and for many years lacked nothing to satisfy her taste for beautiful surroundings. Suddenly her husband died during his brilliant career as diplomat and her fortune fell into unscrupulous hands.

She took refuge in an obscure corner of Paris, selling her possessions one by one to supply her needs. At length even the roof over her head was threatened. Her

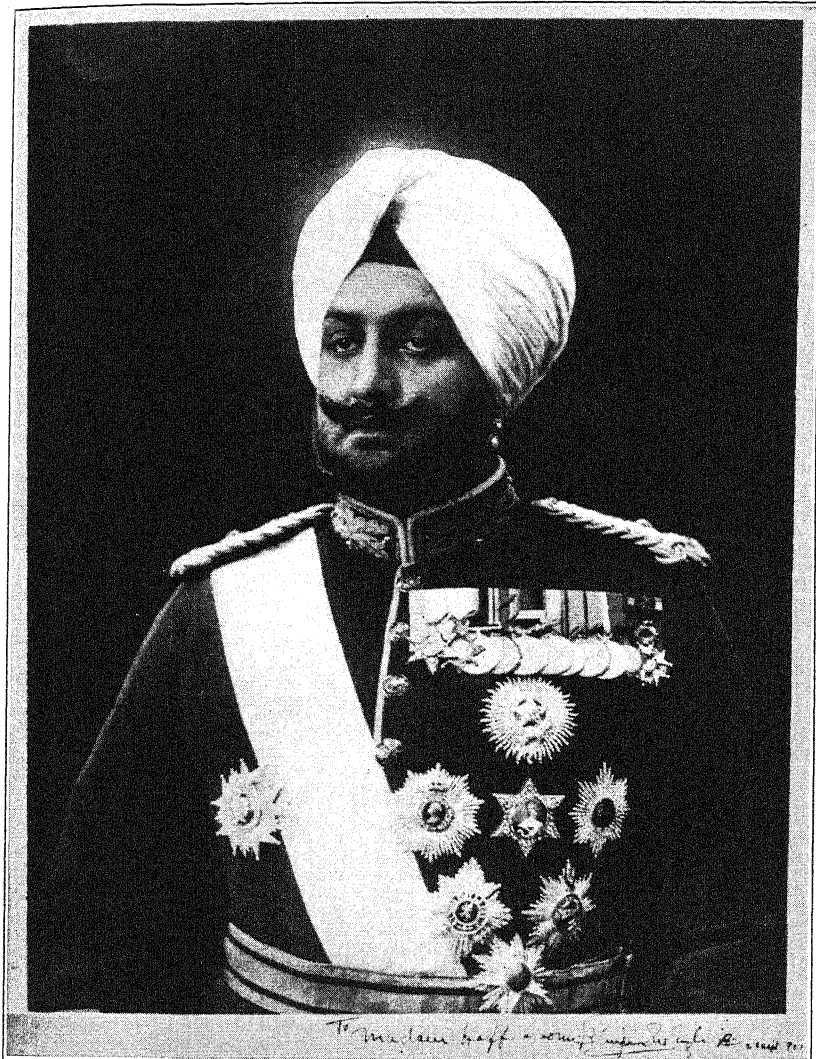
desperate situation was brought to the attention of Mrs. Hoff. Thus began an intimacy which endured until the death of one whose life was blighted by circumstances, one who was ill-prepared to fight the battle of existence alone.

Letters to her beloved friend show that hers was a rare personality never quite submerged by her fate. When the fear that haunted her was removed, she wrote gratefully, 'The peace of knowing that home is safe passes the understanding of those who have never faced the awful desolation that lies outside.... Alas! that sudden poverty does not bring talents and aptitudes as sudden!'

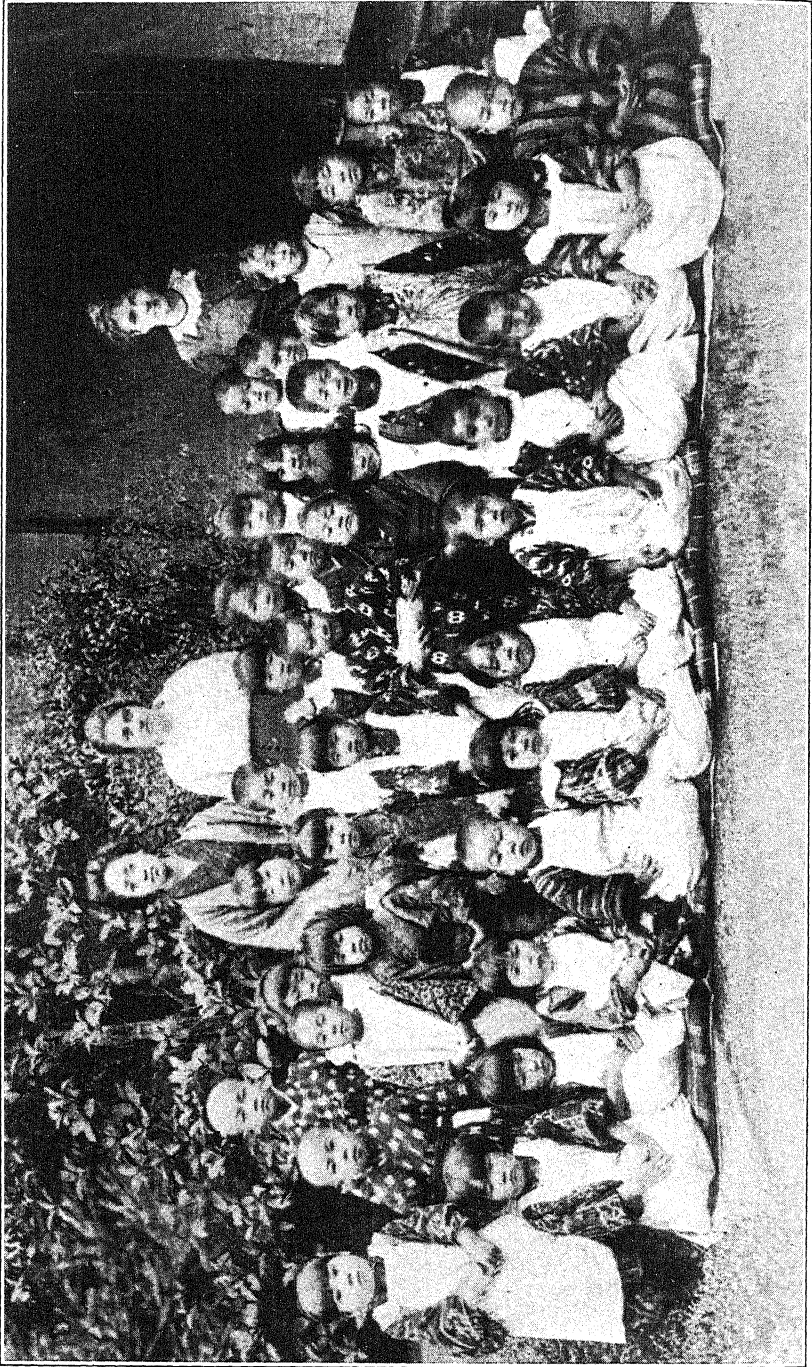
An added trial was the grave impairment of her eyesight. On Easter Sunday, in thanking Mrs. Hoff for the remembrances which she had sent, she said, 'I can only wonder in how many homes today will "Mrs. Hoff" seem almost an actual presence, by her proxies of lovely flowers, consoling words, her familiar signature on checks which flutter down unceasingly from high Peyrieu.... Sweet are the uses of wealth in such hands as yours.'

Every event in the life of Mrs. Hoff she followed with excited interest. After the visit at Peyrieu of an Indian Rajah with his imposing retinue, she sent a lively comment:

The pageant of our brown brother from the far Indus will have been most entertaining. His train lacked but the four hundred greyhounds and bloodhounds, each wearing a jewelled collar taken from the neck of a captive sultana, which followed the conqueror of India a thousand years ago. As you will probably see the Prince again, I venture to send you a little book — the Hitopadesa — which he will be amused to find in your hands. It is a collection of stories translated from the Sanskrit, many of them ageless as the primitive language, mother of all others, in which they were first written down, and the sources of many of our own tales and precepts. It would be such a rare pleasure to me, dear Mrs. Hoff, if you would let the little volume find a dwelling-place upon a shelf at Peyrieu. It is one of the three remaining upon my own.



SIR BHUPINDAR SINGH, MAHARAJAH OF PATIALA, INDIA



THE GRACE WHITNEY HOFF KINDERGARTEN, JAPAN
Organized by Dr. Janet Miller

The intensity of her love for Mrs. Hoff caused her pain as well as joy. So many of life's blessings had been taken away that she feared to lose the only remaining one.

'I am pursued by loneliness,' she wrote toward the end of her life. 'I have no other affection than yours. Shelter, protection, life itself, "you are the giver."' "

A short silence on the part of her friend would send her into an agony of fear. 'I thought that your heart was closed to me,' she would write, 'that never again, morning or evening, would I find the distinctive envelope just within my frowning door. Many a time in my longing I have fancied it slithering through the crack or heard it in the mysterious noises of the night, thinking that my neighbor had brought it up — as he often does — and slipped it in. Leaving my bed I would steal out by inch of candle, to find the little ante-chamber empty of any messenger — then seek comfort with the heavenly host of stars, remaining at my window until the shining galaxy had wheeled and other constellations come within my ken.'

As sickness was added to her other hardships, life became unbearable. 'Not to be able to read, or even buy a book to taste, and dream over, is hard.' Nothing in the world was left her but the affectionate care of Mrs. Hoff. She had been reared in luxury and bred to exquisite tastes until it was too late to adapt herself when her support was rudely taken away.

A book worm is no good to anyone, browsing contentedly in fields of strange lore, feasting upon the curious and recondite, or nibbling at things too mysterious and dim for human comprehension, yet alluring to the pensive mind, to whom 'popular' is anathema. Utterly uneducated in the accepted sense of the term, these tastes, born in me and diligently fostered, have moulded my thoughts from babyhood. Bach and Schumann are my loves in music, you see. I am 'best fitted for a corner.' An old-fashioned creature, last of

her kind, flung out too late from her sheltered life. Good-bye, dear Mrs. Hoff — Good-bye, and love me. While remembrance shall endure, I will be,

Your loving, grateful,
L.

This was her last letter. In the white dress which she had requested, she gave up the struggle of her life and went to seek eternal peace.

A group of people who have had a large share in Mrs. Hoff's sympathy during the past ten years are those bewildered refugees who fled to Paris after the upheaval in Russia. Among her Rest Home guests, the Russians rank next to the French themselves in number, and on the Left Bank, where she has worked among artists and students, she has done much to relieve their distress. Having been plunged into the depths of despair by expatriation and seeing little hope for the future, they look with wonderment upon anyone who holds out a disinterested hand to help them. Where cruelty and hatred have shattered their lives, it seems incredible that kind, unselfish people still exist.

Life for Mrs. Hoff is not a series of incidents, but a great continuity. 'Be thou faithful unto death,' were the words of her Master, and in all her relationships she has followed them. From the beginning to the end her loyalty and interest remain.

'For every day, each appointment is listed and I keep in touch with the individual case. That has been the secret, perhaps, of my helpfulness. Every person possesses a part of my life and I must respond. We pass over the bridges together, but that hand never leaves mine.' On her periodic trips to America, acquaintances are renewed and enriched by new contacts.

Several years after the War, she wrote to all the

soldiers whom she had entertained at Peyrieu, and invited them to visit her in Detroit. She entertained them overnight at her hotel and paid their way back to any part of Michigan.

An old Detroit friend once expressed surprise that Mrs. Hoff was always so glad to see her, and asked her why. 'Because you are connected with everything in my childhood,' was the answer. 'It is as if I were still a link,' the friend said later, 'and she does not want the links broken.'

If there are no terminations in her life, neither are there any barriers. No matter how modest or even commonplace some of her friends might seem to another, they are not so to her, and there is a quality in her friendship which dispels diffidence. The soldiers whom she has helped, her protégés in all walks of life, even her old servants, write to her freely; and each confidence makes a closer bond between them and their benefactor. As Mrs. Hoff wrote to a member of her Rest Home family, 'You have come to me with open heart and I respect your confidence, keeping deep in my soul-life the secret that does not separate you from me, but which draws you nearer.'

Behind all the work which occupies her mind and heart is the echo of an early wish, 'If I can live to make some pale face brighter!' How well her wish has been fulfilled is testified each day by the letters of gratitude and devotion which pour in upon her. Inspired by a depth of feeling which breaks through the bonds of formal correspondence, there is scarcely a letter without its touch of personal affection.

Of all the figures applied to her that of a light in the darkness is the most frequent. A beacon, a ray of sunshine, a candle, an open fire — over and over again these phrases are used by those who walked in darkness until they knew her.

The lifting power of her philanthropy is its most distinctive quality. No one who has accepted a favor at her hand was ever debased by it. As a dear friend once said, 'A gift is often a subtle revealer. It shows the giver's (perhaps unconscious) estimate of the receiver's capacity to appreciate.' Mrs. Hoff has given to all as if they were worthy of the best and, by the very largeness of her generosity, has enlarged the souls of those who receive it.

CHAPTER III

A VILLAGE IN FRANCE

THE visitor driving casually through a French countryside marvels at the vine-covered fences, the trim fields and garden plots, but perhaps he sees little beauty in the bare stone houses that form a typical French village. He sees that they are crowded together on each side of a cobbled street and he may not know that behind the stone wall lies a charming little kitchen garden, with fruit trees trained flat against the wall, for the enjoyment of each family. To him the inhabitants seem crowded as close together as city-dwellers despite miles of farmlands between the villages, and he wonders why they are contented to remain there.

Unlike the American farmer who surrounds himself by his own acres and has been known to put miles between himself and his nearest neighbor, those who cultivate the land in France cling to the advantages of community life, choosing to walk daily to their fields rather than to endure isolation.

At haying time the farmers work together, doing each field in turn, and when the vintage season is upon them, even the village artisans are pressed into service. To the American visitor it is a sad and perplexing thing to find that no shoes can be mended until the cobbler returns from harvesting his neighbor's grapes.

The women, too, share the advantages of community life. Every week they gather at a central *lavoir*, trundling the family wash before them on a wheelbarrow, and, as the clothes are washed in sparkling spring water and spread on the grass to dry, the village news passes readily from mouth to mouth.

Another part of every community is the village *four*

or bakery. Large stones are fitted together to form a huge arched oven that can be made air-tight and heated by a wood fire built inside it. After several hours, the ashes are carefully raked out, and the round baskets of dough brought from each household are inserted. A long stick dexterously pulls out the flat baskets, leaving the loaves to bake slowly on the hot stones, until they acquire that thick golden crust for which French bread is famous.

The baker makes a comfortable living, for he is skilled in the making of tarts, fruit-pies, the far-famed *brioche*, and birthday cakes which look like palaces of icing.

When Mr. and Mrs. Hoff made their first visit to the château on that Christmas Day more than thirty years ago, the village of Peyrieu differed little from countless others in the Ain and Savoie. A little horse-drawn omnibus awaited them at the station, where the train had left them just before daylight. Day came on as they drove through the town, and looking out upon it they were enchanted with its setting. Mountains near-by and snow-covered heights beyond as far as the eye could reach! In between lay the broad valley of the Rhone.

When they came into possession of the château, they looked with friendly eyes at the village. Here was a bit of France — the true France that they could never hope to find in Paris. In feudal days it would have been theirs by the law of demesne. Now, since the feudal law was no more, they would lay siege to the village in their own way and conquer it by kindness.

The little group of people who lived there was a close-knit unit. As they worked together in the fields and vineyards, so did they worship together in the village church, looking up to the village *curé* as to a father, and sending their children to play together at the *patronage*. The *patronage* building, admirably adapted for social service, was given by Mrs. Hoff for the use of the children of the

community. Here the children played their games under a *directrice*, and here the young girls sewed on the elaborate trousseaux which are the pride of every girl in the village. As soon as they are able to hold a needle, the little ones begin to learn their stitches, for it takes eight years to prepare the seventy-six articles that custom prescribes. Three dozen towels, four sheets, and a dozen linen handkerchiefs there must be, besides lace of their own making and intricate embroidery for undergarments. The smaller girls begin on towels; as they become more accomplished, they learn to turn a seam; and finally they acquire the art of fine needlework and lace-making.

It is not strange that Mrs. Hoff soon formed the habit of stopping at the *patronage*, for nothing gives her greater pleasure than a gathering of girls. The little ones at their games were also a joy, for the children of France seemed to her like somber little objects, frequently dressed in black because of mourning in their families, and apparently more familiar with work than with play.

Mrs. Hoff and the children of the *patronage* became fast friends. Twice a year she gives a fête for them. At Christmas time a marvelous lighted tree appears, laden with gifts for the young people and for their parents as well. At this exciting party the *curé* presides over the festivities. When the time comes for unloading the tree, the children hold out their shoes to receive the gifts, for in France the *soulier* takes the place of the Christmas stocking in America. Instead of Santa Claus, they have their good *Père Noël*, and when he remembers them with a gift, it is a part of their enjoyment to pretend great surprise.

After the fête at Peyrieu, the Christmas tree, with its trappings, is sent to an adjoining parish to be used again. Here, too, the local *curé* presides. On one occasion, when a new *curé* was overwhelmed at the size of the affair and felt that he could not handle it alone, Miss Lous of

Le Moulin was sent to take charge. Afterward she wrote: 'We were about ninety in all. Sixty-seven toys were given out, eighty sacks of bon-bons and oranges for the ladies. Everybody seemed happy and pleased and the new *curé* took to it easily, though he had never seen a Christmas tree before.'

During the holiday season Mrs. Hoff receives notes of thanks from the children, for they are taught very young to express themselves correctly and to attend to every courtesy promptly.

In September the children have their day when they entertain Mr. and Mrs. Hoff, Mr. and Mrs. Labouchere at the *patronage*. The *directrice* coaches them in a little play and a programme of music and recitations includes every child. Afterward they march one by one past a table which the *châtelaine* has heaped with gifts. The gifts are offered as prizes for attendance, application, good behavior, order, cleanliness. Each child chooses the object which appeals to him most, although sometimes one is so overcome with embarrassment that he cannot reach a decision without aid. The children never fail, however, to bestow a bow or curtsy of thanks upon the guests of honor.

The play chosen for this occasion is often based on some story from the religious lore of France. Once it was an incident from the life of Marguerite de Provence, Queen of France, that inspired the play. In introducing it, the *curé* explained that the subject had been chosen because of her resemblance to Mrs. Hoff.

'Without your gracious presence,' he said, 'our gathering would be like those days when the sun does not shine. ... As Marguerite de Provence succored the unhappy, you hear all those who appeal to your compassion; you minister to the unfortunate, dry their tears, put consolation into the hearts bruised by woe.'

Every summer Mrs. Hoff gives a children's fête at the château, with games, charades, music and moving pictures, and a magician; but everything at the château seemed so unbelievable to these village children that the rabbit in the silk hat and the silver coins from the elbows of the audience appeared no more surprising, and perhaps not half so delightful, as the little cakes that came onto the table at the appointed hour.

Once, in his farewell speech at the conclusion of the fête, Mr. Hoff said that he hoped when the skies were cold and wintry the children would sometimes think of Mrs. Hoff and him far away in Paris.

'*Mais je pense toujours à vous, Monsieur Hoff,*' cried little Jean Pierre, forgetting for once his timidity.

Jean Pierre was the son of the manager of the Peyrieu property, and he had often been invited to the château to play with the youngest grandchild. Besides these coveted invitations, his choicest Christmas gifts, many of his playthings, and all the unusual joys of his life had come from the *châtelains*. It is small wonder that they stood next to God in little Jean Pierre's imagination.

There were many others in the village to whom Mrs. Hoff ministered with the same self-forgetfulness. Jeanne was a happy seventeen-year-old girl busily working on her trousseau when the scourge of tuberculosis laid its taint upon her. During her long illness, it was Mrs. Hoff who saw that she was well cared for, who never forgot to send flowers, and who tried to comfort the despairing parents when all was over.

Another case was that of the village school teacher, a young girl and a devout Catholic. She became so ill that she could not teach and she did not know where to turn. All her family had been lost in the War. And to further her distress, owing to the separation of the Church and State in France, she had felt cut off from her religion, for

she had not been allowed to mention the name of God in her classroom, and she scarcely dared mention it in private.

She had heard that the *châtelaine* was wonderfully kind, and at last she went to see her. Mrs. Hoff knew at a glance that here was another victim of that fatal malady, tuberculosis. She placed the girl in a sanatorium, planning to send her to Switzerland later. But it was already too late. Mrs. Hoff visited her daily, and when the patient's voice began to fail, it was evident that the end was near. Soon after that the girl whispered to Mrs. Hoff, 'May I call you Maman Chérie?'

Later she asked for a cross. Mrs. Hoff purchased one of silver at a shop near-by, and hung it upon a chain from her own neck. Giving it to the girl, she said, 'When the fever is running high and I am not here to comfort you, kiss the cross. There is another Power greater than mine to bring you comfort.'

A few days later, when death came, the last words the watchers heard were, 'Love God.'

After twenty years at Peyrieu, Mrs. Hoff is counted by the villagers as one who understands them thoroughly. She has become *Présidente d'Honneur* of the *patronage*, and the children play and the older ones ply their needles by the side of a tablet on which she has inscribed the children's motto:

The Child Whom All The World Loves

She always has a kind word for everyone.
 She loves to do good deeds and to bring happiness to others.
 She never complains. She is obedient.
 She divides her time carefully between work and play.
 She never frowns, but she always has a happy smile.
 She thanks God each day for all the favors which make each day happy.

The *châtelains'* interest in Peyrieu has extended beyond individuals to the village itself. They have improved the

public buildings around the square until the little town has become a model for the whole *département*, although sometimes it required patience and diplomacy to overcome the rural attitude of *laissez faire*. When the suggestion was made to plant rose-bushes along the main road, the question was asked by a short-sighted landowner how much would be paid for the privilege. The matter of a town clock was also discussed with skepticism, one side of the issue being summed up by the peasant who said: 'No, we don't need it. When we are hungry, we know it is twelve o'clock and time for luncheon. And there are two trains a day that pass by in the valley.'

Nevertheless, the conservative element was overruled in time. The roses were planted, and in July, 1928, the new clock on the church was dedicated by a service honoring the donors. The whole village attended. As the communicants knelt on the bare wooden benches, the full, melodious voices of the chorus sent forth a solemn chant upon the quiet summer day.

The bonds of friendship which already existed between the château and the village were strengthened during the War by years of devotion to a common cause. In that trying period the château served as a haven, not only for the villagers, but also for the family of the *châtelaine's* daughter. This corner of France became peculiarly their own. It was fitting, therefore, that after the Armistice, the *châtelains* should have erected the first monument in France to the fallen heroes of the Great War.

On November 23, 1919, more than a thousand people gathered at the market-place of Peyrieu to dedicate a classic cenotaph, the joint work of Charly Knight, the American architect, and the Bugist sculptor, Borget.

The gray mist of an autumn day spread a mourning veil over the flags and garlands which Peyrieu had put on for the occasion. In places of honor were the men who

had fought for France, the mutilated ones as well as the other veterans, the widows and the orphans. Beside them stood Mr. and Mrs. Hoff, Mr. and Mrs. Labouchere, and the Labouchere sons.

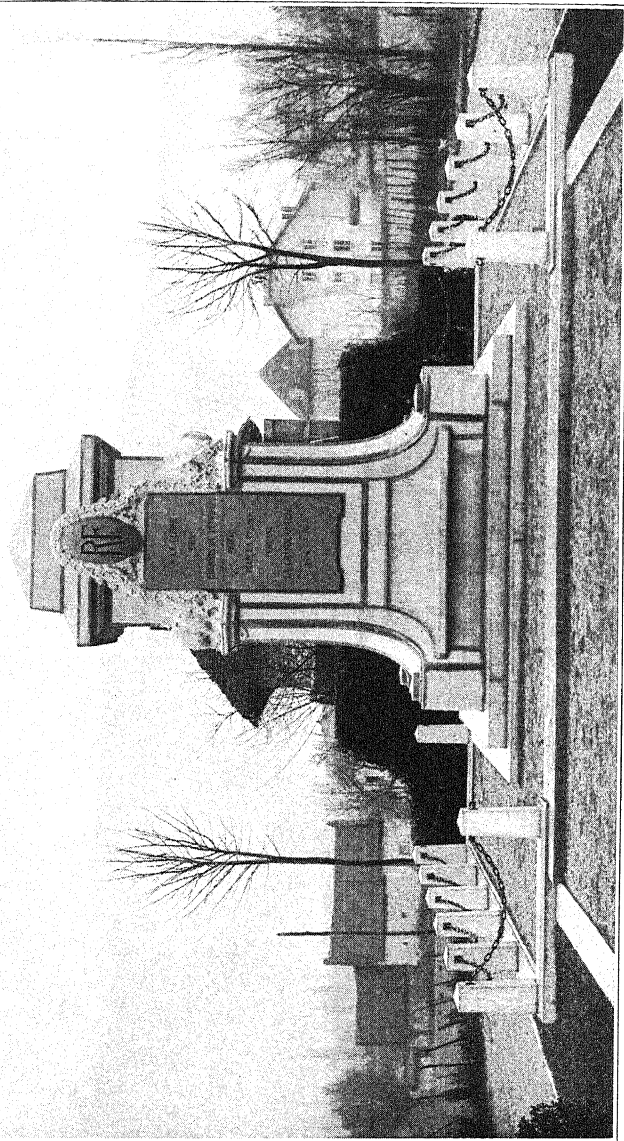
Mr. Hoff opened the programme with a few words of tribute and a Roll Call of the dead. To each name the mutilated soldiers responded, 'Fallen on the field of honor.' After taps were sounded, Mrs. Hoff unveiled the monument and presented it to the village.

In his response the Mayor said:

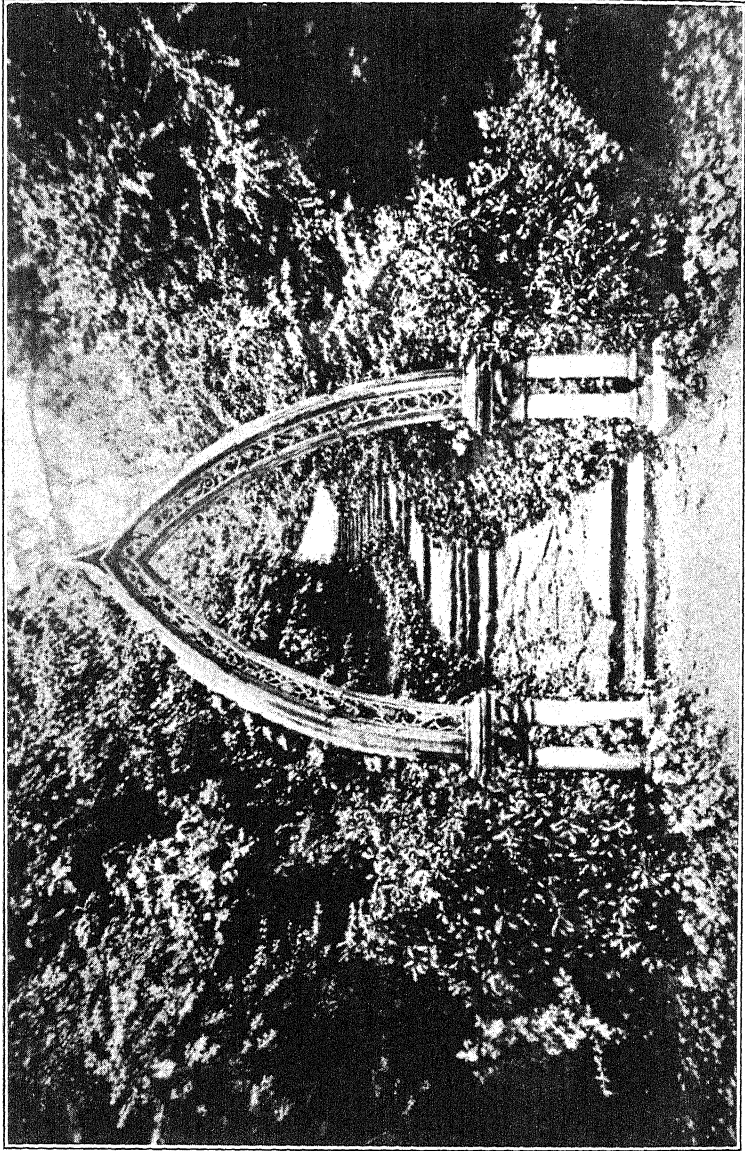
To do good is the joy of noble hearts. The Armistice was hardly signed when Mr. and Mrs. Hoff addressed to the Town Council a wonderful letter which we keep among our archives. With an exquisite delicacy and under pretense of thanking the population for the respectful sympathy with which we are happy to surround them, they offered to us a commemorative monument in honor of the victory and in memory of the noble victims who have scattered glory and sorrow over our soil. To know how to give and to give opportunely is a delicate art which Mr. and Mrs. Hoff practice to perfection.

The truth of this statement the villagers discovered more completely as one by one their public buildings underwent a transformation at the hands of the *châtelains*. The post-office was beautified and the public laundry and bakery were modernized. Formerly the women rubbed their clothes on the rocks along the banks of a stream which brought cool, sparkling water from the mountains to the market-place. Now it is piped directly to the *lavoir*, and, if an element of picturesqueness is gone, picturesqueness is for the observer alone. The peasant women, who never saw themselves as others saw them, thank God for the benefactors who have brought them their new comfort.

In the spring of 1929, Mr. Hoff asked that the village schoolhouse be entrusted to them for the summer months. Permission was granted, and for three months workmen



MONUMENT ERECTED BY MR. AND MRS. HOFF AT PEYRIEU, AIN, FRANCE
First soldiers' monument erected in France after the Great War



CARVED STONE ARCH AT CHATEAU DE PEYRIEU

were busy rebuilding, redecorating, and refurnishing the school.

In September, when all was completed, the dedication ceremonies were held, with the whole village in attendance. In passing the soldiers' monument on the way to the dedication, Mr. Hoff said to Mrs. Hoff, 'This [the schoolhouse] will be *our* monument.'

In his dedication address, Mr. Hoff explained that the motive in performing this new service was to help stem the tide of youth from the villages to the city. By turning the school into a more attractive and modern building, he and Mrs. Hoff hoped to provide for the children a pleasanter atmosphere to work in and happier memories of their childhood.

Mrs. Hoff presented a golden key to the Mayor, thereby returning the schoolhouse which had been entrusted to them. A youthful orator, chosen by his classmates to express their grateful appreciation, enumerated the changes that had been made and gave the pledge of stewardship. 'This school, which we love, we will cherish because it is gayer, more attractive, and we promise you that we will take perfect care of it.'

At the conclusion of the formal exercises the people pressed in to view their new possession. To the children everything seemed too good to be true, and all were astonished by the fact that the inside was no less beautiful than the outside. Describing the event, a newspaper serving the Département de l'Ain concluded, 'Peyrieu may be proud of having the best equipped school in the *département*.'

After attending classes in their new building, the pupils wrote of the changes that had taken place. A little eleven-year-old said: 'The interior is entirely remodeled and our classroom is more spacious, with the white ceiling and the painted walls which picture the fables of La Fontaine. All of these happy improvements we owe to Madame and

Monsieur Hoff, whose name is engraved on our hearts and whom we shall never forget.'

One of the little boys chose to tell of its conveniences rather than its beauty. 'Last year to heat the building,' he wrote, 'one had to use charcoal in an old round high stove. The smoke filled the classroom and it was always necessary to raise the windows to allow the smoke to escape. It was too hot near the stove, too cold away from it — all this was injurious to the health of the pupils. During the vacation, thanks to Madame and Monsieur Hoff, a great work was accomplished. A central heating system was installed which heats the building by hot water in the radiators.'

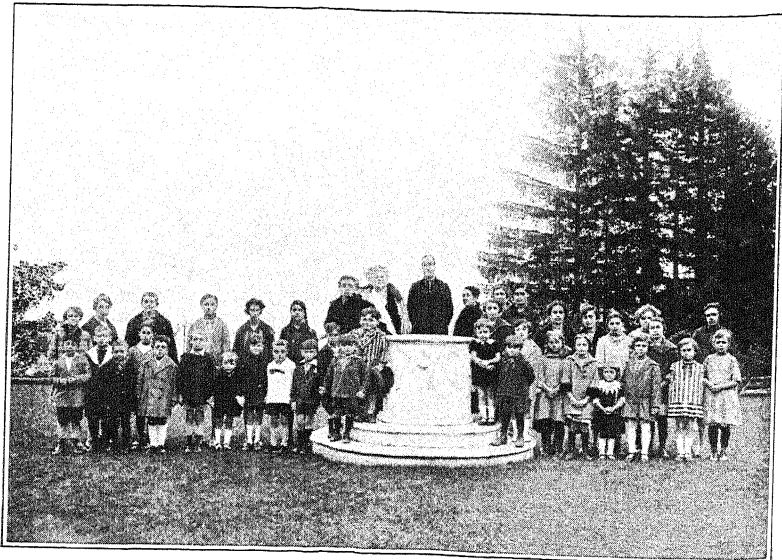
One of the teachers wrote Mrs. Hoff that her generosity did not pass unnoticed, for she had often seen automobiles stopping to allow the occupants to admire the school. The teachers have special reason to appreciate the new building, for their living quarters, which are on the second floor, are now supplied for the first time with running water.

The Mayor himself wrote to congratulate the *châtelains* on the change they had brought about. 'Having passed a part of my youth in a school where the air and light entered only with difficulty, where nothing was of a pleasant appearance, where we were smothered in summer and frozen in winter, I salute today this new school, which has been made over and which will contribute so much to the welfare of the children. Nothing has been forgotten or neglected.'

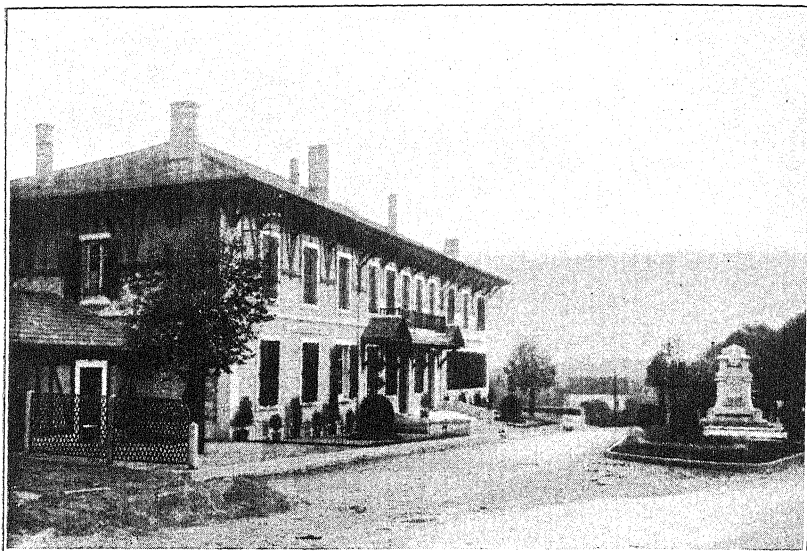
Now there will be no more feigned excuses for absence, because a new stimulus has come to the children of Peyrieu, a new possession, a new pride. No longer must the schoolmistress scan her birth records in order to claim the little five-year-olds, for their parents can hardly wait to present them. It is a privilege rather than a duty to attend classes in a school whose fame has traveled the length and breadth of France.



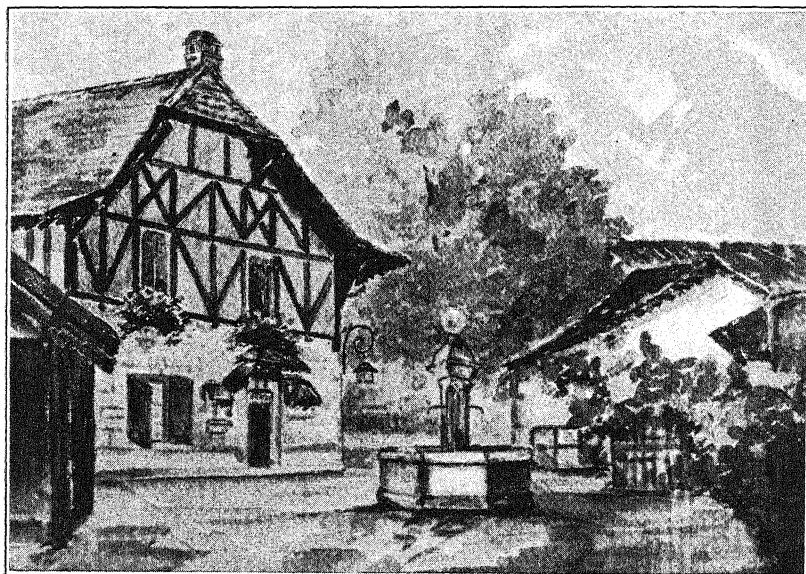
SCENE AT OPENING EXERCISES AFTER SCHOOLHOUSE WAS REBUILT
AT PEYRIEU



Village children at Château de Peyrieu
ANNUAL 'FETE DE PATRONAGE'



Schoolhouse rebuilt by Mr. and Mrs. Hoff; also Soldiers' Monument



Post Office, rebuilt by Mr. and Mrs. Hoff

VILLAGE OF PEYRIEU

Coincident with the dedication of the new building, Mr. and Mrs. Hoff revived the custom of annual prize-giving, abandoned since the years of the War, by furnishing well-chosen books as the rewards of good conduct, general accomplishment and proficiency in each subject.

The revival of 'prize day' has had a stimulating effect on the whole village, for the event is anticipated as much by the parents as by the pupils. It is an exciting but rather solemn occasion, for the French make all their ceremonies impressive. The address of the Mayor, following the award of prizes, influences the pupils as much as the prizes themselves.

On the first prize day, Mayor Girel concluded his address by saying: 'It is indeed a worthy act to reward the child by developing in him a taste for healthful and instructive reading. I am convinced that when these children have grown old, these books will recall to them their far-off youth and they will have tender memories of their benefactors, Madame and Monsieur Hoff.'

The following year, in looking for some way to benefit the village, Mr. and Mrs. Hoff decided to bring a traveling school of household management to Peyrieu. By attending this, girls and women who were beyond school age might continue their education in a practical way.

During the winter of 1930, in coöperation with the *patronage* where the classes were held, a three months' course was offered tuition free. Thirty girls completed the course, and also seven women for whom special evening classes were held. Particular emphasis was laid on modern methods of housekeeping, the theory of hygiene and dietetics, while sewing instruction included not only the making of a complete outfit, but practical work in cleaning, pressing, and mending. At the end of three months, an exhibit of embroidery and the culinary arts testified to the success of the course.

These traveling schools are operated at a cost which seems incredibly low as compared with that of similar projects in America. Students are charged twenty francs a month tuition, the equivalent of eighty cents in American money. In addition they pay for their supplies, but as contributions of meat, vegetables, milk, bread, and wine reduce the cost of cooking materials to a minimum, this charge plus a small tax levied on each pupil averages but six to eight cents per day.

Traveling schools, like the *Ecole Menagère Ambulante* which was brought to Peyrieu, are effective agencies in breaking down many age-old customs of rural France and in increasing the comfort and enjoyment of daily life.

But the largesse of these *châtelains* could not be confined to one village in France. It extended to many towns and through the broad countryside. Such interest and watchfulness for the universal welfare could not pass unnoted. The French people are ever resourceful in the variety of their expressions of appreciation and their tokens continually pour in upon Mr. and Mrs. Hoff. The Council of the town of Belley, ten miles distant, as their citation stated, honored Belley in giving to the broad highroad, shaded by plane trees, entering their important town from the south, the name 'Avenue Hoff' in order to perpetuate in the minds of future generations the memory of these benevolent friends of France.

If one were to ask Mr. and Mrs. Hoff where, in all the world, they feel most at home, they would undoubtedly answer Peyrieu, not because here in a beautiful setting they can enjoy every comfort and luxury that modern life affords, but because they have here to the highest degree the esteem and affection of their neighbors. In thinking of Peyrieu, it is not what they have done for it that lingers in their minds, but what it has taught them of the French people. Here the soul of France has been revealed to them.

CHAPTER IV

LE CHEF D'ŒUVRE

WHEN the War interrupted the activities of the Student Hostel on the Boulevard Saint-Michel, Mrs. Hoff was engrossed, as was everyone else, in the overshadowing tragedy. The Hostel was made into a relief center by the Quakers, but not until every student had found shelter elsewhere. Bombs fell around this old student building, shattering every window-pane, but the one entrusted with the care of homeless students held her post of service when destruction threatened the building.

When Europe came to itself again, the women found that the War had stirred in them a realization of their powers and a hunger for attainment. They thronged in greater numbers than before to the student quarter of Paris. The arts still had their following, but the other professions, such as medicine, law, engineering, and pure science, now attracted girls from many countries.

In the midst of her busy life, Mrs. Hoff had not forgotten the student quarter. While her activities apparently carried her thoughts in other directions, a plan was slowly maturing in her mind. The Rest Homes, beautiful as they were, were only stepping-stones to a greater project. She was beginning to envisage a new Hostel, that would be at once her gift to students (who always lay close to her heart), to France, and to the cause of international peace. The breadth of vision which had been hers, even as a young woman in Detroit, had new vistas opened before it by the War. She saw that peace was the greatest need of a war-torn world, and that in the young intellectuals of all nations lay its hope of achievement. Since a kindly Providence had brought her to Paris, where young people

gathered from all over the world, she would create among them a center of international good-will and understanding.

As always, it was but a short step from her ideal to the practical means of realizing it. Someone has said that the task of engineering is not only to know, but to know how. If that is true, Mrs. Hoff has always been an engineer *par excellence*, for she has never been at a loss for a method. And now, in approaching the greatest task she had ever set herself, she was no less sure-headed, sure-hearted.

Before plans were drawn for the Foyer, she wrote to all former secretaries of the Student Hostel and asked them to tell her freely what they would like to see embodied in the new building. Every suggestion they sent her was pondered and weighed against her own experience. As she started blocking out the new Hostel in her mind, it seemed as if everything in her life had been preparatory to this, which she felt was destined to be her masterpiece. Even that first, bare room at Hellmuth College must have risen before her as she tried to picture what a girl student in Paris would need and would appreciate.

Her natural bent for home-making had been developed by her own home in Detroit, the home in Paris, and the Château de Peyrieu and the Château du Bréau, while her lifelong interest in girls of limited means had taught her their needs and their desires. The Working Girls' Hostel, at 5 Rue de Turin, and the old Student Hostel had been exercises in making an old building serve the purpose of a new one, and the Rest Homes in giving charm and atmosphere in rebuilding. Chanut and Le Moulin, as well as the restaurant and Foyer in Rue Cambon, had taught her valuable lessons in construction.

In choosing as her architect Mr. Charly Knight, co-designer of the War Monument at Peyrieu, Mrs. Hoff secured a man who could combine the best in modern

architecture with American ideals of comfort and convenience. Mr. Knight himself was born and brought up in France, but his father, Ridgway Knight, was the American artist whose 'Hailing the Ferry' was familiar in many American homes.

During the two and a half years of work on the new Hostel, the architects, the decorators, and even the workmen came to have great respect for Mrs. Hoff's ability. Although she spent very little time on the spot, she followed every inch of the construction on paper. Her practical knowledge of the problems to be solved was amazing, while her decisions were instantaneous and unerring. She not only knew how to make the most of every square foot in the building, but before it was finished she knew the zigzag course of every pipe and wire, the location of every socket, hook, and radiator, although these utilitarian objects were carefully hidden from view. One of her guiding principles was to allow no sharp corners either in the building or furnishings. Every piece of furniture she selected herself, and she planned each bedroom as carefully as if it were for a member of her own family.

One hundred resident students were to be accommodated, yet no two rooms were decorated alike. Tinted walls and soft cretonne hangings blended into backgrounds which even the most artistic eye would find restful. Yet, with all this care, Mrs. Hoff felt that her contribution to the Hostel was subordinate to that of the girls themselves. As she wrote to a friend during the construction period: 'I long to see the Hostel occupied by the students, who will prove to be the best of furnishings, but at the same time I must give material comforts and necessities that will complete the whole.'

Throughout the period of construction, Mrs. Hoff's interest in the great task never flagged. She said of it once, 'It is a formidable undertaking, for I meet the

responsibility alone, not only in the construction, but in furnishing and the details of study to assure comfort along practical lines.'

'To assure comfort' (and beauty) 'along practical lines,' these words might have been her motto, for that was the ideal which she held before herself.

The old Student Hostel had been designed primarily for English-speaking girls, but year by year its usefulness had been extended to students of all nationalities. After the War, when the organization resumed its activities, in October, 1919, it was called Le Foyer International des Etudiantes, to accord with the scope of its work. As thousands of students all over the world know and love the old Student Hostel, this name now appears at the entrance to 93 Boulevard Saint-Michel underneath the new name,

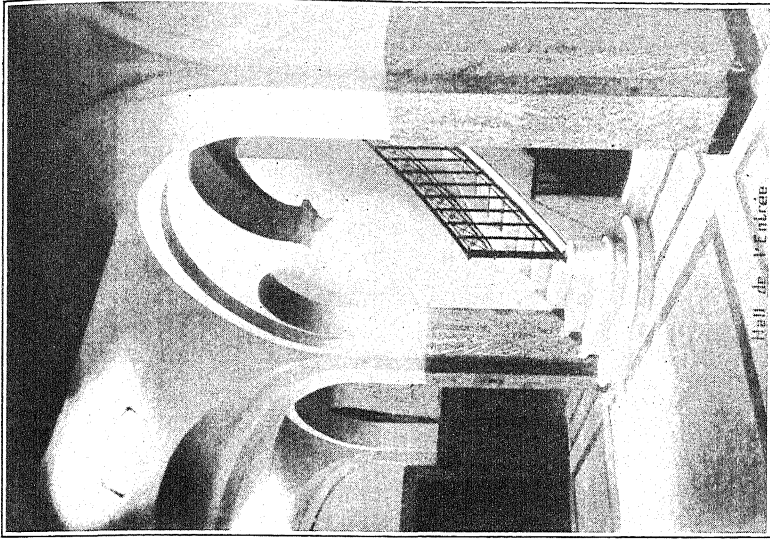
Foyer International des Etudiantes.

The word 'Foyer,' in French, coming from *feu* or 'fire,' meant primarily a hearth. As the hearth was for centuries the meeting-place of the family, it now symbolizes the spiritual as well as physical warmth which a perfect home affords. Carrying out this symbolism, Mrs. Hoff designed a white stone fireplace to dominate the entrance hall, above which is the quaint inscription:

A Dieu foi
Aux amis Foyer

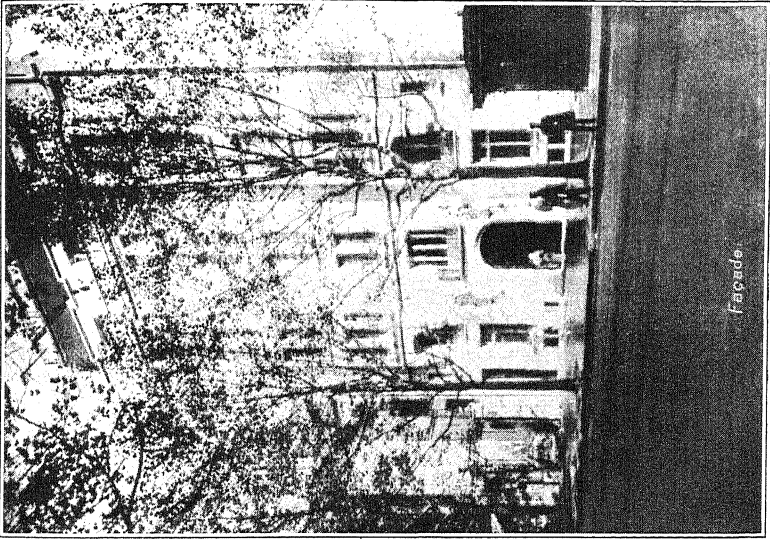
— meaning, *Faith to God, to friends a shelter and good cheer.*

This motto is on the Archbishop of Winchester's Palace and was brought to Mrs. Hoff by an English girl who has been a devoted secretary of the student work on the Boulevard Saint-Michel from its earliest days, Miss Annette Tritton, the daughter of Mrs. Herbert Tritton, who sug-



Hall de l'Entrée

Entrance Hall

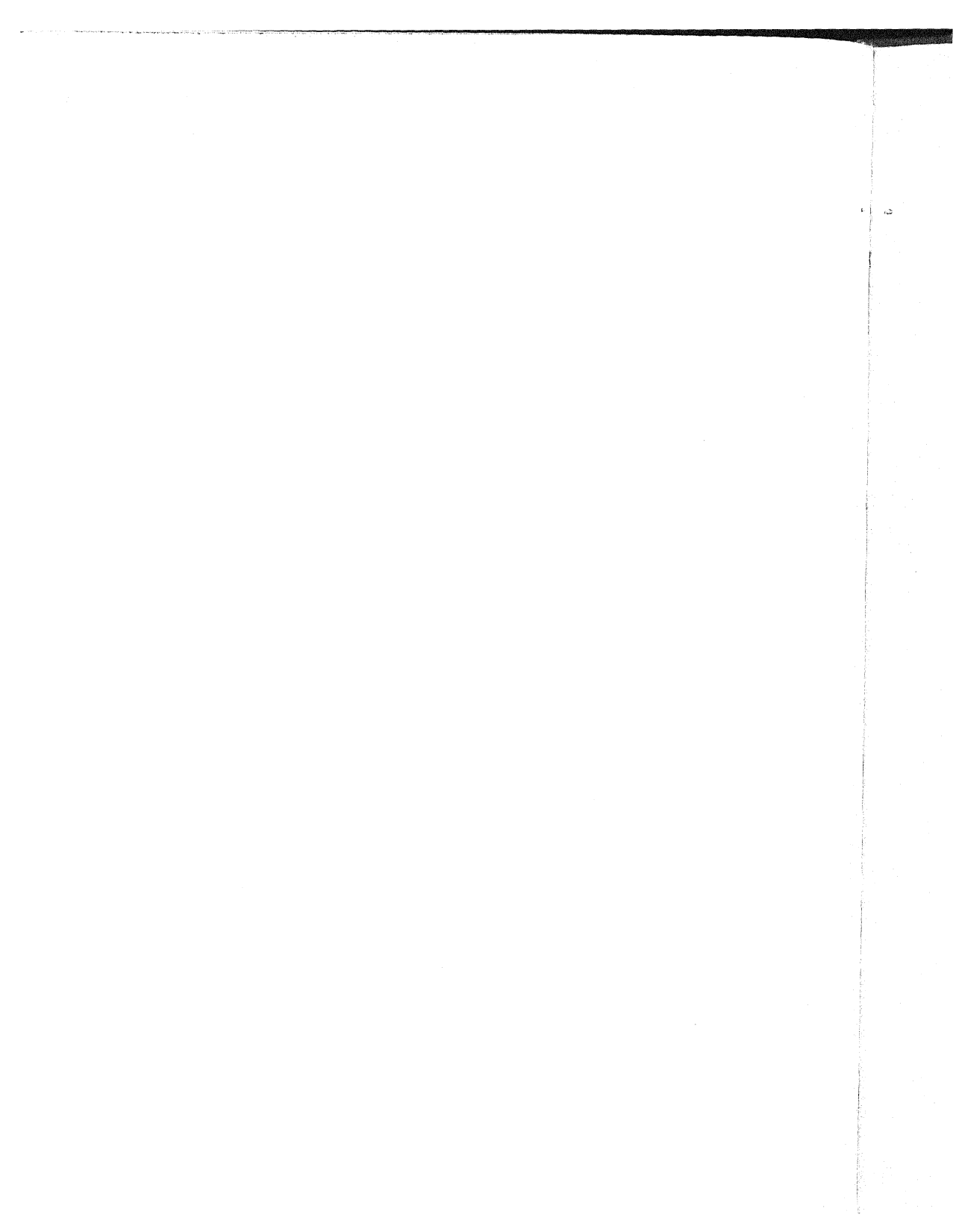


Façade

Façade

THE FOYER INTERNATIONAL DES ETUDIANTES

Built by Mrs. Hoff



gested Mrs. Hoff as the organizer of the British-American Young Women's Christian Association.

The day set for the dedication of the Foyer was October 10, 1928. It was to be a memorable day in Paris, for the gift which Mrs. Hoff was making to the students was unique in conception and had been executed with a lavishness which to the French people seemed almost incredible. Monsieur Cavalier, representing Monsieur Herriot, then Minister of Public Instruction; Monsieur Charléty, Rector of the University of Paris; Monsieur le Pasteur Boegner, President of the French Christian Federation of Students, were to be present at the ceremony.

Before the many friends of international peace who assembled at this dedication, Mrs. Hoff delivered her speech in French. Her words showed how truly this gift had been the work of both head and heart.

Referring to the work of the Student Hostel, which had been inaugurated twenty-two years before on that same spot, she said:

I am here today as a mother who loves to be surrounded with sympathetic guests when she celebrates a new era in the life of a beloved child....

The spirit of gratitude expressed by those who have found protection, courage, and inspiration during their years of preparation for service has largely helped to build this modern building....

The keystone of this building has been placed by the great unseen Architect of the world; the foundation stones rest on God's promises and it is God's love that holds together the stones of beauty.

Discussing the needs of the day, she set forth one of the guiding principles of her life:

Material equipment is only a small factor in meeting the problems that confront the world; the power of its usefulness will come from the unseen spirit and force of Christian love and understanding.

Later she described the ideal on which her gift was founded:

If I interpret the policy of the Foyer International des Etudiantes, it is to associate ourselves in the work and interests of the Federation, to help women students to make the best of their opportunities, to help remove obstacles that impede their progress, to create such an atmosphere of Christian sympathy and understanding within the walls of this building that the broader interpretation will be manifest in the supreme decision of each student to have anchorage in moral principles, so as to feel the freedom of spirit and action which is the basis of power.

Appealing then to the leaders of the student organizations, she said:

The power of the Foyer will not be found in the silence of these walls; sympathy will not be read in the prescribed rules and regulations of this organization. No, the life of the Hostel will make itself felt, vibrating and alive by the welcome that the students will receive on the very threshold of this dwelling and by its warm and harmonious atmosphere. It is that which will personify to the eyes of the student the ideal of woman, in the fullness of her life....

To you, students, I address a decisive appeal. It is to stand secure as an example of pure womanhood, which rises above the feverish agitation, the tumult and dissonance of modern life.... It is woman finally who forces herself to create a union between the real and the ideal....

In its limited span a human life can only bequeath a very small heritage to such a work as this, but I should like to see the word 'Christian' written in glowing letters on the key-stone of this Student movement....

As I transfer to the Foyer International des Etudiantes the key to this building, I ask the administration of the movement to open the door wide for students to use their trained minds, not only in the circumscribed area of personal needs, but to unfold to them the vision of the future, which means preparation for universal peace....

Let there be a beacon light of hope issuing from this Foyer out to this great City which leads the world in art and educa-

tional privileges. Let there be impartiality, magnanimity, and largeness of purpose, constructiveness, tolerance, coöperation, and above all unity of spirit.

So it is the marriage day of my child, who stands before you in her bridal attire of beauty, and as I commit her future to the guidance of her protector, I find the mother heart giving her benediction to work and workers. In confidence I entrust my child to your vigilance.

After a speech of acceptance on the part of Monsieur Cavalier, Director of Higher Education in France, and addresses by Monsieur Charléty and Monsieur le Pasteur Boegner, Mrs. Hoff invited the guests to view the building which she had watched taking shape for more than two years. It is not strange that she should have looked upon it as her child come of age; indeed, the Foyer looked not unlike a bride as it stood in its pure white beauty awaiting the life that lay before it.

Looking at the seven-storied building from the Luxembourg Gardens, which lie across the Boulevard, or standing in the entrance hall with its groined arches and symbolic fireplace, the guests that day did not dream that one full year of construction was spent beneath the level of the ground. But when they saw the three basements, one below the other, filled with modern devices, they agreed with one of their number who called the Foyer a *conte de fée moderne*.

They saw heating apparatus of the most efficient type, an incinerator, electric motors, dumbwaiters, ventilating machines, and a kitchen installation that might well have been the work of Aladdin's lamp. Finished completely in marble, tile, or metal, were spacious supply rooms, gas stoves, automatic refrigerators, huge soup kettles so balanced as to be adjustable with minimum effort, and a vegetable washing-basin of blue mosaic. On the kitchen level, also, were *vestiaires*, lockers, and baths for the

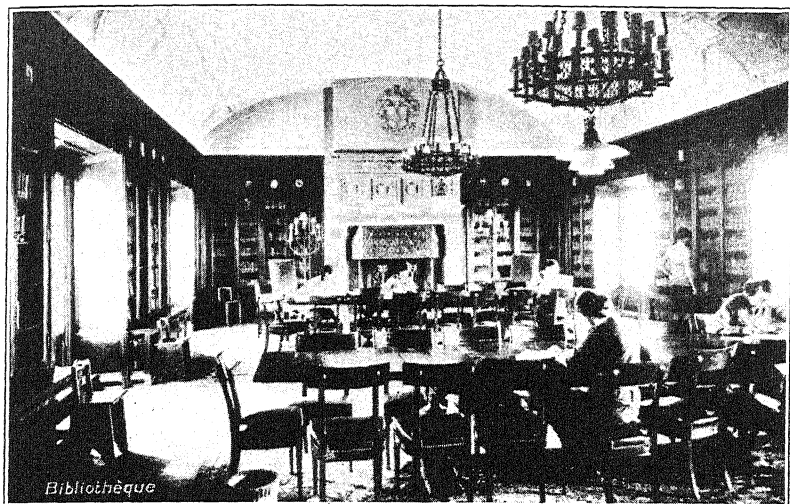
many non-resident students whom Mrs. Hoff wished to include in her family. Those guests, who had already been impressed with her generosity and taste, now saw from the arrangement of the three basements that she was also gifted with practical intelligence of the highest order.

The main floor, of which the visitors had had but a glimpse, confirmed this impression. Here was a cafeteria, destined to bless many a hurried student. It was equipped to handle a thousand at each meal and to serve well-balanced menus at a minimum cost. A beautiful auditorium extending upward for two stories occupied the rest of the main floor. At night this room was to be a setting for a varied social life. By day it became a tasteful living-room where tea would be served every afternoon for the students and their friends.

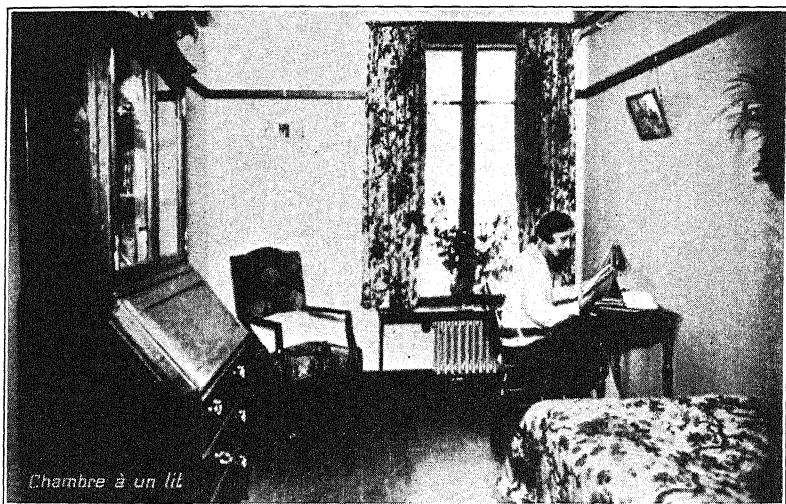
On the next floor were salons, club-rooms, and practice rooms with sound-proof walls for the use of music students. An informal reading-room would supply the girls with French newspapers and the leading foreign periodicals. In this room a girl from the old Student Hostel might have felt strangely at home, for here were the very wall seats and cupboards which had lent their charm to the garden teahouse of the first Student Hostel.

Taking an elevator to the top floor, the guests were shown into the library, in many ways the most beautiful room of all. Here was a Francis I fireplace of majestic proportions, which Mrs. Hoff had brought from the Château country. Between the recessed windows were emblazoned the crests of all nations. Six thousand volumes from the old Hostel already lined the shelves, and more were to be added. Flooded with sunshine and high above the noise of the streets, this room would be a veritable haven to students in a quarter where libraries are taxed to the utmost.

On this same floor is the meditation room, a little

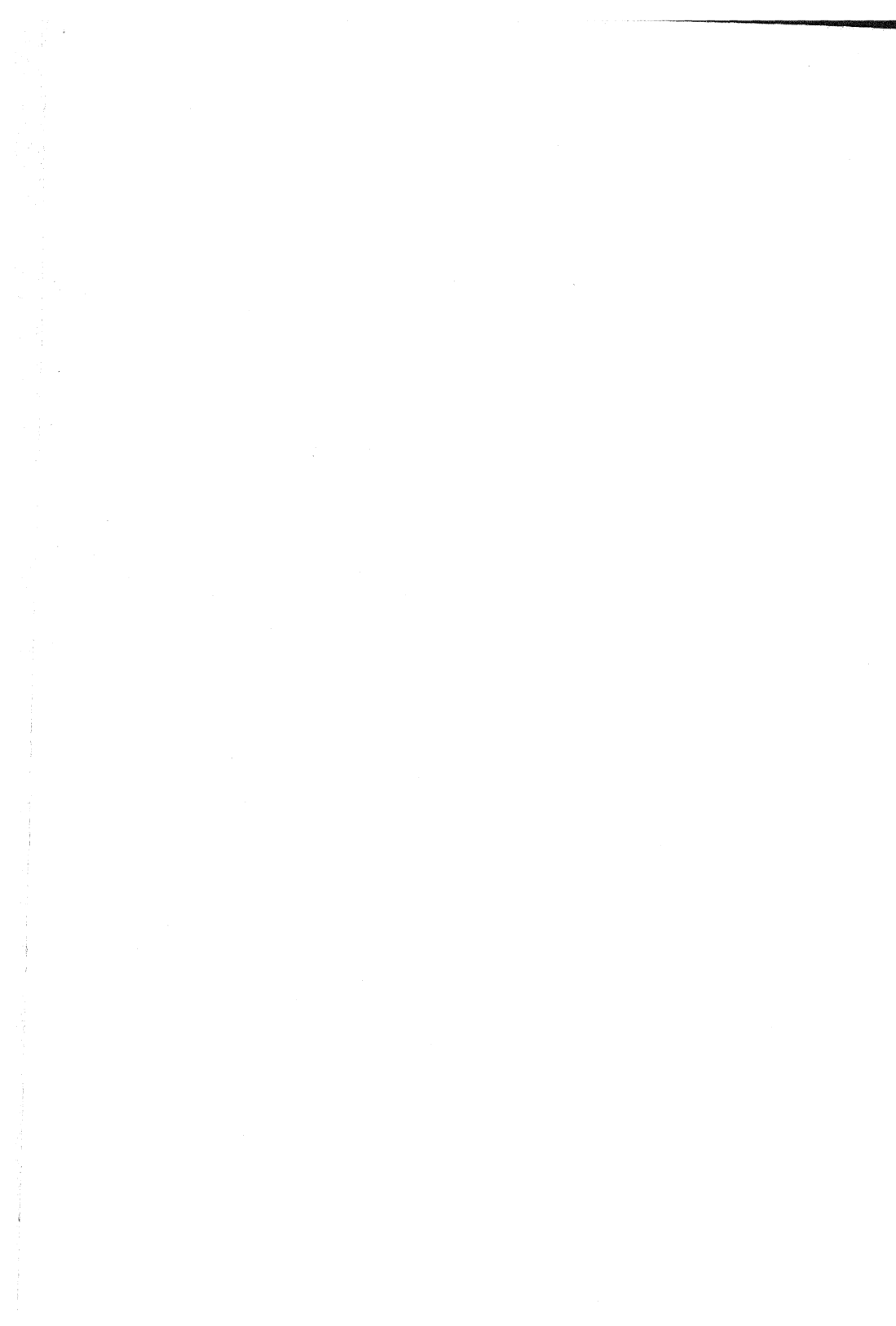


Library



Single room for student

THE FOYER INTERNATIONAL DES ETUDIANTES



chapel whose very walls exhale an atmosphere of peace. Years ago Mrs. Hoff had learned that often a girl needs a quiet place, detached from the rest of the world, in which her soul may find repose. In building the Foyer, which was the embodiment of her life experience, she did not forget to provide for this spiritual need.

For physical relaxation there was an airy rest room, well supplied with divans and cushions; and a solarium, with specially prepared glass designed to allow the passage of the powerful healing rays of the sun, is furnished with a goodly number of couches.

Close by the solarium the guests were shown a model infirmary, unique in the City of Paris. This was equipped with the idea of serving not only the one hundred girls who would be resident in the Foyer, but any member of the Students' Mutual, who should be in need of care. Three rooms were fitted with beds, one being reserved for cases that might after observation be diagnosed as contagious. A diet kitchen and a resident nurse ensured proper food and care.

What a blessing this infirmary was going to be to the student living alone in Paris, none but those who have been ill in a friendless lodging-house can tell. Now there would be a place to receive students who needed care, and a friendly committee to search them out. The fear of expense would be also removed, for all the beds were to be endowed, some by the efforts of the students themselves, and no charge would be made to any member of the 'Mutuelle des Etudiantes' except her thirty francs annual membership fee. In many ways this care of the sick was the most vital service the Foyer would render.

The guests had been told that the rooms they had just seen were on the top floor, yet from the infirmary they were invited to climb one more flight of stairs. There they found the whole of Paris spread out before them, with the

graceful lines of Sacré Cœur in the distance. A portion of the roof was enclosed for windy or stormy weather, and a kitchen near-by provided for roof-garden *réunions*. A circular chart gave the key to the vistas below, and over it the girls might study for hours the spires and monuments of Paris.

After such a wealth and variety of accommodations had been displayed, it might have been expected that the students' rooms would be an anti-climax. But such was not the case. Anyone accustomed to the usual quarters of a student in Paris could not help but feel that here was real luxury and forethought for every need. The visitors found no reminder of the usual uninviting chambers with ugly bedsteads and chiffoniers to offend the eye. These were living-rooms, with tinted walls, a wide luxurious couch, with covering, pillows, and draperies to match. The ample closets made provision for every part of a girl's personal belongings, and a tiled dressing-room with hot and cold water offered the utmost in convenience and privacy. The furniture was of solid oak, each piece serving its special purpose better than anything else could have done. Even the upholstered and wooden chairs had been carefully selected after Mrs. Hoff had examined more than a hundred others.

If the Foyer itself was her grand *chef d'œuvre*, her little masterpiece was an article of furniture of her own design. Of beautiful proportions, it served primarily as a desk, but glass-covered shelves above and ample drawers below provided for the endless equipment of a student.

Other proofs of Mrs. Hoff's imagination were utility rooms on each floor, which provided electric irons, set tubs, and a sewing machine. Where else in Paris could the girl away from home care for her own clothes with such convenience?

One thing more remained for the visitors to see — the

court with its terrace. Here on pedestals stood the wall fountains which had once been a part of the gardens belonging to the convent which for centuries occupied this site. From this terrace the long cathedral-like lines of the Foyer became apparent, and, although the court was surrounded by other buildings, nothing marred the dignity of the scene. One would not think that the adjoining walls had been gray and untidy, for Mrs. Hoff did not forget that the windows of many Foyer rooms looked out upon this court, and when the Foyer was finished, the entire court was as sightly as if it were a part of the building itself. On that opening day everything within and without the Foyer blended into a perfect harmony.

On October eleventh, the newspapers of Paris carried enthusiastic accounts of the building that had been opened in the student quarter. The *Nouvelles Littéraires* referred to Mrs. Hoff as the Good Fairy of Students, and the Paris *Midi*, a leading journal, likened her Foyer to the Palace of the Arabian Nights. The provincial newspapers also had their words of praise regarding the work of Mrs. Hoff in smoothing the pathway of students. From Bourges, Limoges, Lyons, Grenoble, Nantes, Poitiers, and many other cities came detailed accounts. As the news got abroad, educators from near and far began to congratulate Mrs. Hoff on her accomplishment, and many expressed the hope that their own universities would establish a similar work.

Dr. Molinary, writing of the Foyer in *La Médecine Internationale*, said, 'Seven thousand students [medical] in Paris, how do they live and what is done for them?' After describing the comfort and convenience of its living quarters, he enumerated the privileges of the library, the cafeteria, and all the activities of the Foyer (which non-residents may obtain by paying thirty francs a year), with special emphasis on the infirmary.

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La Mode Pratique, a woman's journal, selected the cafeteria as one of the outstanding features of the Foyer. 'In Paris,' it said, 'where even in the small cafés, one makes of dinner a ceremony, a modern cafeteria planned to serve a thousand people is indeed an innovation. For about five francs [twenty cents] one has a menu of *hors d'œuvres*, meat, vegetables, and a dessert, and everything is of the first quality.'

In America the news of the Foyer was heralded with interest. Many cities read of the far-reaching gift of their country-woman in France, but none with more pride than Detroit, which still claimed Mrs. Hoff as its own. The *Detroit News* concluded its article on the Foyer by saying, 'If Mrs. Hoff's fellow Detroiters could be shown over her latest gift to women students, their first comment would probably be that here is one of the most beautiful structures of its kind that has been built.'

When the Foyer had been running but a few months, students who lived there sent word of it to their friends at home, and local newspapers picked up the refrain. *Morgenbladet*, a newspaper of Oslo, Norway, described the beauty of the building and its twentieth-century conveniences. From Beirut, Syria, the Foyer was spoken of as a home where young women '*du monde entier*' could learn to understand each other. *La Dépêche Marocaine* described it as '*un véritable palais*.' It was a remote spot indeed where the work of the 'Good American Fairy' passed unnoticed.

The *Journal des Débats* of Paris gave the reason for this widespread interest when it said:

Sincere friend of France, which she has made her second country, understanding her beauty and culture, she has thus extended her generosity to all parts of the world. Madame, let us thank you. The youth of all nations, whom Paris gathers in her open arms, will find in your Foyer friendship,

security, and comfort. Our country is honored in having such friends.

In the train of these comments, and increasingly as the work went on, came a throng of visitors to the Foyer. Of all sorts and nationalities, they included many eminent persons who were interested for themselves or for the organizations which they represented. The Minister of Public Instruction in France with several colleagues paid the Foyer a visit. The American Embassy also sent official representatives. Monsieur l'Hôpital, aide to le Maréchal Foch, went through the Foyer and was so impressed that he asked if he might bring the Maréchal when his health improved. Unfortunately, that day never came.

Monsieur Alengry, Rector of the University of Besançon, was so impressed by the possibilities of a student center like the Foyer that he went over the plans in detail with Mrs. Hoff and paid several visits to the building itself. Such centers are especially needed in the universities of France, where social life among the students hardly exists, and the Rector felt that at Besançon, an international student building would give the students a richer life and a better understanding of their fellows.

The Director of the American Library in Paris, after a visit with his wife to the Foyer, wrote to Mrs. Hoff that that day was one of the greatest experiences of the last decade of their lives.

Neither my wife nor I dreamed that so complete, faultless, and beautiful an installation existed in France. Everywhere was spotless cleanliness, order and good humor.... There are few such monuments in the world to one person's foresight and generosity.

And thus the letters poured in, scores of them every day, with phrases that would seem extravagant if they did not breathe such obvious sincerity.

'The Foyer is unique,' wrote one, 'in that it is planned with the thought of a captain of industry and the love of a mother.'

By another it was called, 'Your beautiful Palais de la Jeunesse.'

Monsieur Batiffol, Historian and Administrator of the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, an eminent friend and admirer of Mrs. Hoff, expressed his appreciation thus: 'Her Foyer is magnificent and beyond praise, combining all the American ideas of comfort and hygiene with the beauty of the Old World. In the construction of this building she has shown herself possessed of a master mind.'

Mrs. Hoff's attitude toward the Foyer was characteristically self-effacing. The long months of construction, she wrote to a friend, instead of bringing burdens of anxiety, brought the constant realization that she was *privileged* to share her blessings with others.

Despite the letters of congratulations which poured in upon her, she did not forget that a greater One than she had placed the riches she had used in her hand.

'Now that the Foyer is launched on the sea of activity,' she wrote to a former colleague in the Paris Young Women's Christian Association, 'the satisfaction and joy are mine that the Master has made it possible for me to offer it to the students of the world as an inspiration and protection.'

It was not a false humility which inspired these words, for the consciousness of her debt to God was always with her. Even in the Foyer itself she felt His hand, so far did the completed structure surpass her highest dreams.

Like an artist who sees on his canvas the picture which he has so many times seen in his mind, Mrs. Hoff contemplated the Foyer on its dedication day with pure delight. The joy of creation was hers. But she knew that an even greater joy would arise from the lives of almost

countless students which would be made more abundant by her gift. And if there had been any sacrifice in her giving, she asked only the reward of knowing that for years to come students would look daily upon her masterpiece and love it.

CHAPTER V

AN INTERNATIONAL FAMILY

THE Foyer International des Etudiantes was not a vague enterprise launched without definite plan or aim; its policies were well determined before the opening day. The language of the house was to be French, and, of the one hundred students living there, one quarter were always to be from France. As *Le Figaro* had said in its account of the dedication, the connecting link between France and the other nations represented at the Foyer would be the culture they had come to seek in Paris. Of the seventy-five residents from other countries than France, twenty-five were to be chosen from America or England or English-speaking countries, and the remaining fifty places were to be apportioned among other nationalities. When the building opened, twenty-five countries were represented in the residents.

The fee for living at the Foyer was twenty-five francs, or one dollar a day, and the membership fee which opened its privileges to non-residents was thirty francs a year. Only girls who planned to earn their own living, and who were actually registered as students in Paris, were eligible for residence. Selection from among the applicants was made by the committee and the general secretary, guided by letters of recommendation, and in many cases by personal knowledge of the student's circumstances.

Often an application had to be refused for lack of room, even when the girl seemed desperate for a home. The first winter a Russian wrote that she had a right to live in the Foyer, for she was the loneliest student in Paris. But there was no vacancy. Then a room that had been engaged was given up and the girl was sent for.

'A miracle has happened!' she exclaimed. 'I come to live in the Foyer on Sunday.'

Small wonder that she was incredulous, Fortune had not smiled on her in so long. She had fled from Russia under a false passport and gone to join her fiancé in Berlin. In a few weeks he had died of malignant fever, and she was left alone, unable even to communicate with her family.

When the Student Federation discovered her in Paris, she was suspicious of everyone — lonely, poor, and almost ill from her struggles. A month in a rest home for students and a room in the Foyer marked the beginning of a new life.

When the Foyer was dedicated, the building was ready even to the smallest detail to start its work. The day after the ceremony, girls from all over the student quarter poured in to take possession. With baggage packed and trunks tagged, they had been waiting in cheap hotels, lodging-houses, even garrets, until the moment came to move. Twenty-four hours later, one might have walked in and thought the Foyer had been occupied for ten years. The building was alive with quiet activity. Every piece of machinery worked. The dream had come true.

'After five months in Paris,' wrote an American resident, 'this is the first time that I have really felt happy about my home.'

Not content with what she had already done, Mrs. Hoff established an annual scholarship of five hundred dollars at the opening of the Foyer. This was for any promising student in need of aid, the only condition being that she remain at the Foyer a year. Another scholarship she offered to some member of the Grace Whitney Hoff Federation of Detroit. This is a group of business girls connected with the Young Women's Christian Association, which

has cherished her memory for more than thirty years. The fund yielded fifteen hundred dollars annually, to cover the cost of traveling, nine months' residence at the Foyer, one month at Le Moulin Rest Home in South Central France, and two months' travel in Europe. Among the many traveling fellowships offered in America, this one offered to girls of the working class is probably unique.

One scholarship already existed when the Foyer was built, a fund in memory of Rose Cullen Wallace, beloved secretary of the original Student Hostel. On a Sunday afternoon in 1907, Rose Cullen with her mother and sister had dropped into 93 Boulevard Saint-Michel for a cup of tea. They were Canadians passing through Paris on their way round the world. One of the workers there was so charmed by Miss Cullen's personality that she asked her to meet Mrs. Hoff. The outcome of that meeting was that, when her mother and sister continued their journey, Rose Cullen stayed in Paris as student secretary at the Hostel.

Beautiful in her appearance, sympathetically intelligent, and delightfully humorous, she made a lasting impression on students and secretaries alike, while her understanding of their problems lightened the path of many lonely girls. After her marriage in 1912 to Edward W. Wallace, now President of Victoria College, Toronto, she went to China to live, and there died in 1924. It was in her memory that the Hostel received its first scholarship, given by Mr. Hoff as a birthday gift to his wife.

When the new Hostel was built, he made a further gift to the fund in order that one room might be set apart for the holder of this scholarship. Here a portrait of Rose Cullen is hung and underneath it are inscribed the words:

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

In the old days of the Hostel, a welcome into Rose Cullen's room was unfailing, and now girls who are chosen for their spiritual as well as their intellectual promise are carrying on in her memory.

One important function of the Foyer is to furnish a well-balanced programme of activities to widen the interests of the members and break the monotony of their daily round. Those to whom Paris is only a pleasure ground can hardly realize what a strained and narrow life the serious student there is likely to lead. A few hours spent in impersonal lectures, many hours in a large impersonal library, and then more study in her room — that is her life, with few contacts and fewer diversions. Always there are examinations to be passed, and in no western country is academic competition so keen as in France. A student can become a secondary teacher only by passing an examination where success depends, not on attaining a certain grade, but on the number of vacancies in the *lycées* for the following year. It is not unusual for more than a hundred persons, both men and women, to compete for twenty vacancies. The strain is accordingly great, but once the *agrégation* is passed, the candidate's career is assured.

Physical or moral breakdowns in this student world are not infrequent, and the aim of the Foyer is to help maintain the delicate balance of normality. Each day it offers the delightful relaxation of tea in the living-room. Here introductions take place easily and acquaintances ripen. Lively conversations follow, supposedly in French, but fragments from other tongues are often heard. Groups may be intimate or casual, and a Hindu in native costume may converse with a New England minister's daughter without restraint.

On alternate Sundays tea is accompanied by a musical programme which is always delightful and often represents unusual talent. This is a favorite time for the girls to en-

tain their friends, and the *salle de conférence* on a Sunday afternoon is filled to overflowing.

Other activities of the Foyer are numberless. It arranges art exhibits, lectures, discussion groups; it holds courses in physical culture and dancing, and meetings for spiritual refreshment. It plans excursions, fêtes in national costume, and Saturday night dances. Even theater and concert coupons are available. The Foyer is truly a world in itself.

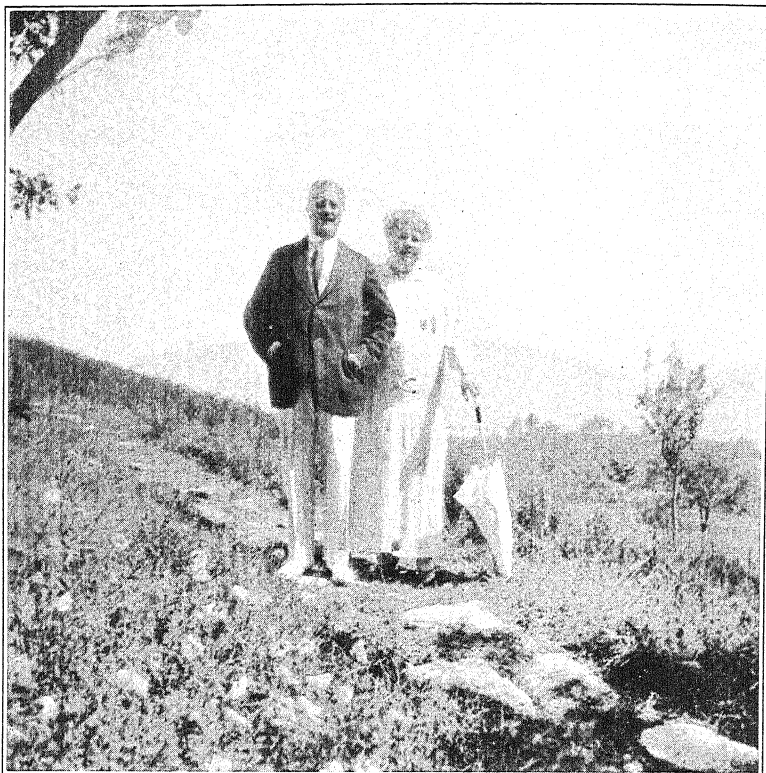
The programme of a typical fortnight in February shows something tempting to a student of any type. Among the events are a study group discussing adolescent tragedies with a woman lawyer; a lecture on Saint Louis as a great religious figure in France; a meeting of the Library Guild of the theater of J. Romaine; tea on Sunday with a singer and pianists (*premier prix du Conservatoire*); a meeting of the International Student Christian Association conducted by the Reverend Marc Boegner; a talk on the educational system of France; on Saturday night a fête of the French provinces, with supper; and on Sunday a meeting of the Foyer members with reading in front of an open fire.

In its varied programme the Foyer is merely continuing what Mrs. Hoff began years before at the Student Hostel. There she herself was hostess at the afternoon tea hour, and many of the artists, musicians, and lecturers who appeared were her personal friends. Among these were Chaminade, Massenet, Raoul Pugno, Georges Enesco, Mary Cassatt, the portrayer of maternity, and Herbert Ward, the distinguished traveler, sculptor, and lecturer. Miss Cassatt first exhibited at the Hostel merely as a personal favor to Mrs. Hoff, but later, through a genuine interest in the work, she became president of the International Art Union.

The first Christmas in the new building was a day that



MRS. HOFF
About 1929



MR. AND MRS. HOFF

On the mountain near 'Chanut,' War Widows' Rest Home, Peyrieu, 1926

lingered in the memory of many students far away from home. Several days beforehand came a Christmas Tree party for the poor children of that district. Then Christmas Eve with its carols brought haunting memories of other years in other countries. The next noon those who remained at the Foyer and many *externe* members partook of a lavish dinner. Tea in the afternoon was accompanied by Christmas music, and the day concluded with a watch party before the fireplace in the library.

A Russian girl living at the Foyer wrote to Mrs. Hoff that night, telling her what all these festivities meant to a lonely girl in Paris. First she described her life as a foreigner, without family, without home, always alone and always a stranger. Then:

At Paris I heard of the Foyer International. I went there. I inscribed my name as a member. I found there my friends, my home.

During vacations the solitude was particularly trying and I only desired that the holidays should pass quickly. But this time I forgot and did not feel my solitude. We all celebrated Christmas today. The whole house was decorated and blazing with light. The Salon des Fêtes was trimmed with your exquisite flowers and Christmas tree. Miss Watson [the general secretary] was beautiful and radiant; she is our comrade, she is everything to us.

We are very animated with congratulations, gifts, letters, beautiful costumes. The door opens constantly for the *externe* members who come to take lunch with us. The long tables beautifully laid await us in the dining-room. We are many. The menu is very long and very good. It is gay. We put the colored paper hats on our heads, and every nationality says 'Joyeux Noël' in its mother tongue. Then we take photographs, and we thank in turn the Founder, the *Directrice*, those who served the dinner and *Bon Appétit*.

At four o'clock tea with French cakes, the old songs of different countries are sung. The artists are applauded and sing several encores. We are enchanted and do not utter a word; the cakes are eaten, the time has passed and the day is done.

Looking in at the Foyer that Christmas Day and seeing the students so happy there together, even French and Germans arm-in-arm, one would have thought that the Christmas gospel, 'Peace on earth, good will to men,' was coming to pass at last.

A letter written to Mrs. Hoff as a Christmas greeting pictures the Foyer in an unfamiliar world:

The first contact with this unknown world is painful. One would like to go away again to one's own familiar home, hear the voices of friends, not to be obliged to meet continually people who are indifferent to us, strangers to one's inner life. And even our studies, the dear studies for which we have traveled over France, Europe, and in some cases the ocean, seem to us a heavy burden.

Like a mother you have understood all this, and like a fairy godmother you have erected the Foyer for us, the house where it is good to live, where one's eyes rest on beautiful things, where one hears beloved voices. As soon as the threshold is crossed, one feels the joy of life. What matter then the weariness, the duties of the day when in the evening they can all be forgotten!

On the day of the dedication, Mrs. Hoff paid a tribute to the devotion of her secretaries in the old Hostel, and she reminded those who were to continue the work in the new building that the ministry of the individual worker had lifted many a student to a higher plane of living and revealed to the apparently circumscribed life the vision of a successful future. In spite of all she had done for the old Hostel and the new one, she felt that her work could never have been a success without the devoted and intelligent aid of these secretaries. Outstanding among the early workers were Dr. Louisa Holman Richardson (now Mrs. Everett O. Fisk), Mrs. Hoff's lieutenant in everything connected with the Hostel; Rose Cullen, Annette Tritton, Lydia Bushnell-Smith (now Mrs. Linus H. Hall), Roberta Hodgson, Mabelle Morgan.



STUDENTS' CHRISTMAS DINNER AT THE FOYER INTERNATIONAL DES ETUDIANTES



Miss Tritton, daughter of the English member of the World's Committee of the Young Women's Christian Association, has been a volunteer worker at the Hostel from its beginning, living there every winter because she loved to be with the students. An art student herself, she enters sympathetically into the life of the Latin Quarter. She has been a spiritual influence among the girls, radiating faith and unselfishness, and when the Foyer was built, she welcomed the wider field of service. Unobtrusive but effective, her work goes on; and through her weekly letters Mrs. Hoff is kept in touch with the little happenings at the Foyer almost as if she also lived there.

Next to Mrs. Hoff herself in the girls' affection stands Miss Watson. An American Southerner of great charm, she went to France for service during the War. When the War was over, she decided to remain, and became the secretary of the Student Hostel. There under all the handicaps of the old building, she labored to fill the growing need among students, sometimes with discouragement in her heart, but never on her lips.

When the Student Hostel was reestablished, Miss Watson could have been no happier if she herself had come into a fortune. She did, indeed, come into a new home, for, as general secretary of the new Foyer, she occupied a charming suite in a quiet part of the building and a cozy office on the second floor. Here on the wall hangs one of her greatest treasures, a seventeenth-century map of Paris, showing *Le Monastère des Feuillants des SS. Anges*, where the Foyer now stands.

Many a pair of eyes follows Miss Watson's upright little figure with admiration and love as it flits about the Foyer, for her gentle voice and eyes as blue as gentians have endeared themselves to everyone.

'She has a kind heart,' wrote one of the girls. 'Miss

Watson is so good, *si parfaitement gentille et maternelle* to us all!

Between Mrs. Hoff and Miss Watson there exists a perfect fellowship and understanding. The one provides and the other administers almost as if a part of the same personality.

The end of 1930 marked the tenth anniversary of Miss Watson's connection with the Student Hostel. Knowing Mrs. Hoff as she did, she was not surprised to receive a familiar envelope on that day. But when she opened it, the words she tried to read danced before her eyes. Mrs. Hoff had written her usual affectionate greetings, but another sheet was enclosed which said:

In recognition of Miss Sarah P. Watson's devoted allegiance during a period of ten years to the Foyer International des Etudiantes (Student Hostel), I take pleasure in giving for five years an annual scholarship of ten thousand francs per annum to the Foyer International des Etudiantes of Paris, to be called the Sarah P. Watson Scholarship. The first annual payment of ten thousand francs I enclose with gratitude to our beloved *Directrice* and best wishes for the advancement of the work.

Miss Watson replied in the simple phrases of one who has been deeply touched:

My heart is overflowing with love and appreciation for the most gracious and beautiful thing that has ever come to me. It is with a very keen sense of humility as well as gratitude that I receive your scholarship. I thank you with all my heart and I dedicate myself anew to the task that you and our Heavenly Father have entrusted to me.

It was a part of Mrs. Hoff's plan that an American should be at the head of the Foyer. The secretaries who assist Miss Watson, however, are of several nationalities, and some of them were formerly student members of the Hostel. They, too, have been strangers in Paris, and they

understand the problems that are brought to them. Each secretary performs her special service, and among them they form a storehouse of information regarding the students' Paris.

If the secretaries at the Foyer have tact and understanding and skill in handling others, they have need of all these qualities and more, for they are dealing with a tragic generation. The product of the War, many of the girls have had no home life and have been permanently marked by suffering or privation. In almost all there is a nervous tension which they are not aware of, but which betrays itself in a crisis.

That greater joy which Mrs. Hoff anticipated must have filled her heart when letters from Miss Watson and Miss Tritton began to come with their glimpses of daily life at the Foyer. The latter wrote a week after the Foyer was opened:

I want you to hear some of the lovely things that are felt and said by the girls themselves. A new Polish student drifted in to lunch today. She said: 'There is surely love here — how does it happen?' A Russian in one of the double rooms just said to my Russian friend, 'I cannot believe I am not dreaming, to have such happiness living here after the nightmare of the past.' An English girl, 'How is this place so filled with happy people? If you feel down on your luck, you are sure to meet a smiling face and it makes you smile too.'

And she adds a little word of appreciation for the little chapel on the top floor:

Already the *Salle de Méditation* has brought some of us together in twos and threes.

Later in the month she told of a new development:

Many of those a little older have begun to feel the responsibility for those whom we call the children. There are about twelve quite young ones and Mademoiselle E. said: 'That is exactly what you can do, be an older sister.' I hope it will go on like that instinctively.

With more than a thousand students going in and out of the Foyer daily, the secretaries could not have watched over them without the older students to help them. Many of 'the children' who would have been homesick and miserable for months opened like rosebuds under the comforting friendship of an 'older sister.'

In but two weeks Miss Tritton began to discover the problems confronting the Foyer. She wrote:

Many are having a hard time, and I get to know a great deal of the poverty, how the girls are struggling to earn money at the same time they are studying.

All these were children ten years ago, now seventeen and eighteen.... We are reaping War years. That is why a lot of them look so tired out, why this good restaurant and everything we are providing is going to help tremendously to fight tuberculosis and mental troubles. We have all those early years to fight against.

Other letters tell of an entertainment given by the British group who were raising money to endow a bed in the infirmary, of an Art Committee with seven nations represented among the nine members, and of how much the girls were enjoying different features of the building.

I wish you had been in the solarium from one-thirty till four yesterday. It was full of girls resting or reading or sleeping or writing — letters going home to mothers in many different countries — and the sun blazing in. I sat quietly in a corner and gave thanks for our wonderful Foyer.

Yesterday afternoon we spent planning how to receive Miss Ting, the World's Young Women's Christian Association Chinese Committee member who comes straight to us from America for a short visit. We have picked out various girls of all nations, talking English, who could be or are interested in Women's Christian work. We shall have a little tea party with her.

We shall have the pleasure of welcoming an American who is over here for a year to work at the Student Quaker Center.

She is one of the real old-fashioned saints and does us all much good.

Forgive this scribble, only I so wanted you to have the little daily happenings of our Foyer, which is really yours.

From Central Europe came a girl to finish her medical course on a small government scholarship. Her family life had been a tragedy, her sister unjustly shot as a spy, her father brought to his death by ill treatment. The government scholarship was discontinued before she had completed her course, and without a stipend from Mrs. Hoff she would have been unable to finish. For two years she earned room and breakfast at the Hostel by serving at the desk from eight o'clock until midnight. She adored children and helped care for some little Americans in whatever time she could spare. Her dream was to establish some day a children's clinic in her own country.

One day a young Chinese girl was brought to the Foyer and left alone, although she could speak nothing but her native language. When spoken to, she would laugh and say to everything, '*Oui, oui, oui!*' But when asked what she wanted to study, she answered, '*Droit,*' not at all daunted by the thought of studying law in a strange language. At first she needed someone to show her about everything, and for months she could hardly be dragged from her books. Yet before long she was appearing in European clothes and was gaining assurance every day.

Each winter the building is full to capacity, but at no time in the year is there an idle moment. In the summer temporary guests, students who are traveling, often friends of the winter occupants find refuge here. Just before leaving the Foyer for a summer vacation at home, Miss Watson wrote:

Seldom have I had busier days than these — every minute there is someone. Girls are arriving, others are leaving, some are getting engaged, and one tragedy has happened. A

Polish medical student has lost her mind. She was always in our library studying. She didn't come last week and we thought she was busy with her examinations. On Saturday I received a telegram from her family asking for news, as her landlady had telegraphed for the family to come, she having had the police take the girl to the hospital. Her sister came today and we are doing all we can for her.

This was a girl whom the Foyer did not reach in time. She had confided in no one, and when the breaking point came, there was no one to help her. But for one case like this, there are many, many cases where the Foyer has been able to avert or at least to mitigate tragedy.

A type of student to whom the Foyer is a special blessing is the girl who works every day at the Bibliothèque Nationale, doing her literature thesis without even a lecture course for inspiration. These girls have no student life, and in many cases, if they have an hour to spare, it is not for diversion, but to give a lesson, perhaps at the other end of the city. If they live by themselves, they can be utterly miserable and alone, but now at the Foyer relaxation and companionship can always be found.

Among the French girls whom the Foyer has befriended was a student who contracted tuberculosis. For three years her fellow students supported her in a sanatorium. Although they were working outside of their studies to supplement their own funds, they each gave one franc a day in the hope of saving this girl's life.

One girl applied to the Foyer for counsel soon after it was opened, because she had lived at the former Hostel for three years and had no other home to turn to. At twenty-three years of age her life seemed wrecked. Left by her husband with a year-old baby, she had no home and no resources. But the only home she had known in Paris did not fail her. It took her in and helped her to make arrangements for the baby until she could prepare an apart-

ment for him and herself. In order to finish the medical course she had begun before her marriage, she was advised to do her *baccalauréat* in France, although she had already received it in her own country. Although it meant a tremendous amount of extra work, she started in again, aided by work in a hospital and by loans which she paid back as she could. This girl, who had been a child of luxury and indulgence, now won the admiration of all her associates by her courage and perseverance.

Tragedy as well as blessing in this student world takes many forms. A young student, devoted to music, was operated upon for mastoiditis and awoke from the ether to find herself deaf. Another life shattered, it seemed, for her chosen vocation was gone and the future stretched before her like a barren waste. From the hospital she was taken to the Foyer infirmary for convalescence. There for the first time she met Mrs. Hoff, whose flowers and messages had comforted her. The meeting was like an omen of hope. Exhausted by the fatigue of leaving the hospital, the girl had fallen asleep, and when she opened her eyes, her new friend was bending over her. The beautiful face in its halo of silver seemed to her like that of an angel.

Though kindness surrounded her, the poor girl, who was never to hear another note of music, worried constantly about her future. It was suggested that she learn fine bookbinding, and from that moment life took on a different aspect. As her father was a portrait painter and all her family had been talented, the artist in her responded with joy to the new work.

In her letters to Mrs. Hoff she described her course of training. 'I am learning drawing, painting, and later on, *dorure*, or bookbinding *de luxe*. One is supposed to read the book one is binding, in order to give it an appropriate drawing and coloring before binding it.'

Later, in telling of four books she had just finished, she

said, 'I so much want you to be pleased and proud of me one day. The thought of you is very stimulating.'

In another letter she wrote something that a few weeks before would have seemed impossible. 'I am almost glad that I lost my hearing: it has enabled me to make your acquaintance and I feel lonely no more.'

Although the Foyer is fostered by the Student Christian Federation, Protestants, Roman Catholics, Jews, Hindus, and Mohammedans have been received with equal welcome. The first year two Mohammedan girls, both young and far away from home, both pioneers among their people, found a friendly shelter there. One was from Jugo-Slavia and one from Northern Africa, but they became fast friends and might often be seen with their black heads together talking busily in French. Both had worn the veil until their arrival in Paris, and had promised to resume it on their return. On Fridays, as was the custom among their women, they put on a white veil and made a prayer for the dead.

The girl from Northern Africa was brought to Paris by a woman who had known the Hostel in her own student days. After her marriage she lived a part of every year in North Africa, and became acquainted with T.'s mother, an Arab woman of unusual attainments and advanced ideas. Few of her contemporaries were educated, but she could read and write, and insisted that each of her seven children be taught. She was ambitious for them all, but especially for the youngest daughter who was bereft of her father soon after her birth.

After T. had completed the usual schooling of Mohammedan girls, her mother sent her to the *Lycée*, and here, to the astonishment of her mother's critics, she proved an excellent student. Completing her course, she was the first Mohammedan girl of her country to receive a *baccalauréat*.



MRS. HOFF WITH AN INTERNATIONAL GROUP AT THE FOYER INTERNATIONAL DES ETUDIANTES
Each in her native costume



The mother and her friend Madame B. were anxious to have the little *bachelière* continue her studies in Paris, but the girl's uncle and the religious authorities were opposed to such a radical step. For more than a thousand years, they said, Mohammedan girls had left their schools at the age of twelve and had shut themselves away from society. Thereafter they left their homes only in closed carriages and heavily veiled, nor did they look upon the face of a man, save father and brother, until the day of their marriage. Were an Arab woman and her daughter to put these customs aside?

But the mother, supported by Madame B., persisted until it was finally agreed that, if the child would study medicine and return to serve her people, she would be allowed to go. Any other study would be for her own pleasure and therefore intolerable. But here would be a sad life, they predicted, for no man could love a girl that had been looked upon by all the world.

Madame B. wrote to the Foyer, but, finding that no room would be available, was at a loss what to plan for the girl in Paris. Then came word that a reservation had been cancelled. All was arranged at last and Madame B. would take the girl to Paris.

On the day of departure, Madame B. waited on ship-board for the girl to join her. The minutes passed and no girl arrived. As three gangplanks one after the other were drawn up, Madame B. foresaw the failure of all her plans, but she begged for a little time yet — her friend would be sure to come. The taxi, detained on its way to the boat in a last remonstrance, appeared at length, and the girl set her foot upon the last gangplank just in time. Paris now was something more than a dream.

At first the little Moslem felt strange and lonely in the Foyer, and when Madame B. was obliged to leave Paris, she could not keep from crying. But by Christmas

time, when her good friend returned to comfort her through the holidays, she felt quite at home in the Foyer, was already succeeding in her studies, and the future was full of hope.

One of the most tragic yet inspiring groups in Paris today are the Russian refugees. Though Russia has disowned them, they love their country and still cling to its memory. The older ones, highly educated before the Revolution, have too often found that the world has no use for their learning. Some have become teachers, but classes in Russian are few, and who wants a Russian to teach his children French or English? Some have found work in the laboratories, but most of them are glad to earn a livelihood at anything. Their own careers are finished, and for their country, too, they have no hope.

Among these people a revival of Christian faith is taking place. Everything else is gone. If they are to live at all, they must have something above and beyond the world to sustain them, something which only the Church can give.

'I have no strength except from God,' said one of them, 'so how can I do otherwise but believe in God?'

In the midst of their suffering, the thought of self has been swept away; they live only for their faith and to help one another.

The younger ones are not yet reconciled to the fact that all is over. With the fervor characteristic of Russian intellectuals they are clinging to their hopes. At any cost they are educating themselves, partly because heredity urges them blindly on, and partly they feel that Russia — their own Russia — will need them some day.

'When we have finished, then Russia will be ready!'

The Russians of a former generation, who received their education in the French schools, have missed the training in their national faith, which has made them the more

determined that their children shall have it. They even adopt Russian orphans at great sacrifice, to bring up in the faith, to educate, and to send back when Russia calls. As intellectuals at home, they labored for a cause which disowned them. In Paris, they still sacrifice themselves for an hour that may never come.

From the day of its founding in 1906, the Student Hostel has sheltered many Russians. Even in those days they worked with a special intensity, and success in examinations was the supreme goal. Failure was not a simple matter. Perhaps the family had emptied its purse for them and was depending upon the successful student for aid. Then failure meant not only disgrace but ruin. It sometimes meant that life was no longer worth living. If there was an understanding friend like Rose Cullen to help them through the crisis, all might be well, but sometimes there was no one and nothing to save them.

Conditions for the Russian student in Paris are now more trying than ever. Now they have less money, and whether they pass or fail, there is less prospect of work. But still they go on hoping and studying for very life, in spite of loneliness, cold, and even hunger.

One Russian who came to the Hostel as a Rose Cullen scholar had been helping to support her parents and carrying on her medical course at the same time. Her mother took in sewing, and her father, who was not well, earned a little delivering hats. At the end of her long day, M. often helped him, and, to bring in still a little more, she took up massage.

An attack of appendicitis brought her to the attention of the Hostel secretary, who later recommended her for the scholarship.

Never shall I forget the visits which I made to her during her illness. They will remain among the most beautiful memories of my life. Stretched on her poor little cot in that

garret, to which she had managed to impart the love and brightness of her own life, she received us with a luminous smile, which flooded the whole chamber with light.... After her serious operation she recovered quickly and took up her work without a day of rest.

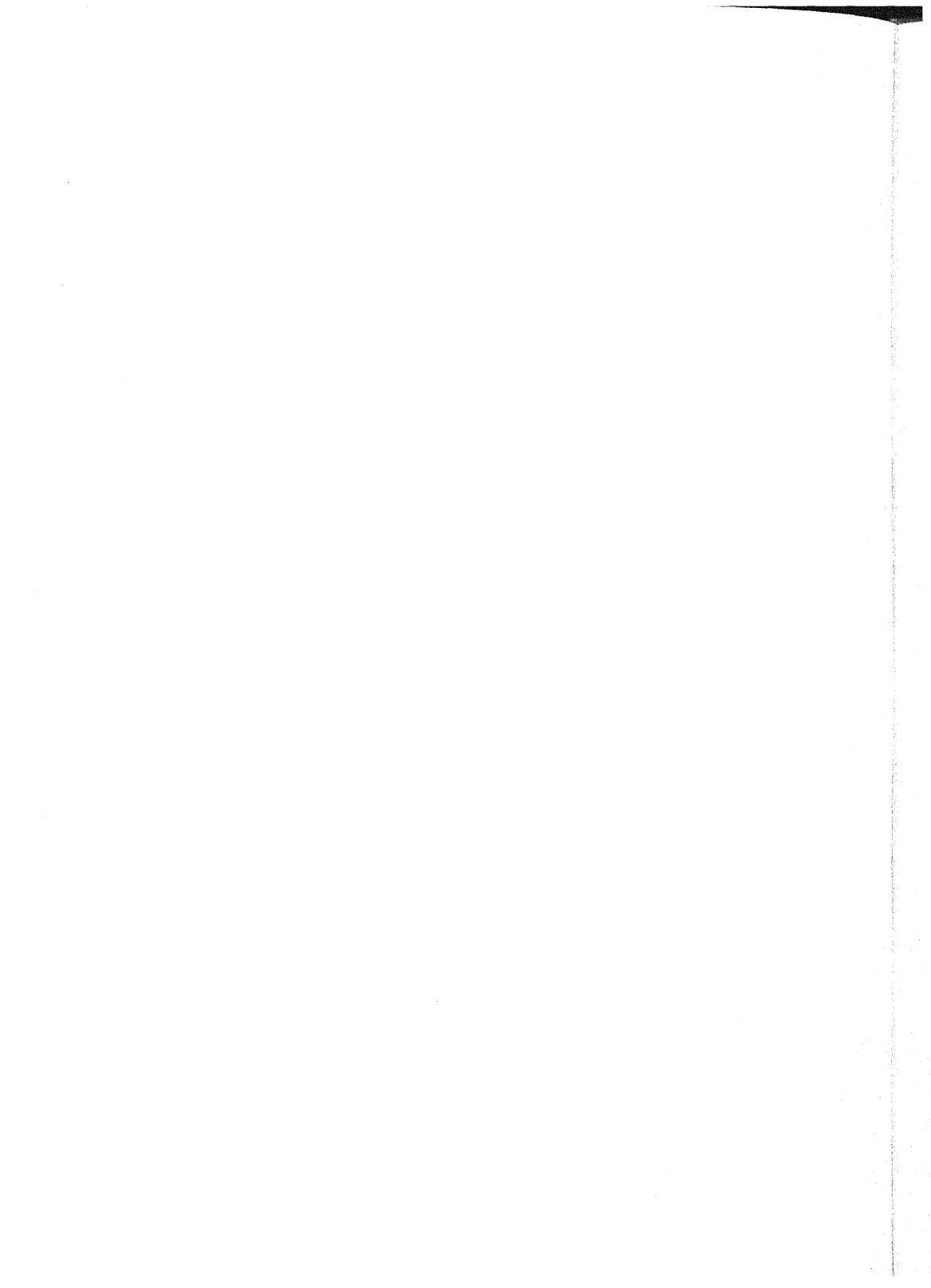
Other Russians were beginning to frequent the Hostel, and it was largely through M.'s influence that a Russian branch of the Student Christian Federation was formed in Paris. Into their small attic room M. and her sister took a little Polish Jew who had spent her last penny bringing her father to Paris. He was dying of cancer, but she hoped that in the city he could be cured. From hospital to hospital she took him until there was hope no longer. When he died, his daughter and her two Russian friends were the only mourners. Behind the body as it was borne toward a cemetery of his own faith walked the Polish Jew and the orthodox Christians. That Pole and Russian, Christian and Jew, should be bound together by such devotion bespeaks the dawn, perhaps, of a new humanity.

Probably nowhere in Paris can a girl live as cheaply as at the Foyer, if necessity demands. One Russian girl, for example, whose income is less than twenty-five dollars a month, manages to pay for her tuition, her room rent, her breakfast, and for most of her clothing. In many cases the Foyer has lent money in small amounts or given meal tickets. Once several notes payable remained in the safe for four years, but just after the new Foyer was opened, the girl came in for tea and said, 'Now I can begin paying you the debt I have owed so long.' She did not even forget the meal tickets, twenty in two years. 'No one can ever know,' she said, 'what the Hostel meant to me during those impossible years.'

One girl wrote from Latvia saying how unhappy she had been because she had never been able to pay for her meal tickets. The secretary replied that if she liked she could



ANNUAL REUNION OF REST HOME GUESTS AT THE FOYER INTERNATIONAL DES ETUDIANTES



become an associate member of the Foyer and pay twenty francs a year. The girl, who could do that much, was happy to find a way at last to show her gratitude.

A year after the Foyer was opened, a letter came to Miss Watson from an American, a little Quaker student, enclosing a check, and saying:

When I got home last winter I resolved that if ever I got a job, I was going to send fifty dollars from my first check to you, to use in any way you wished. I was thinking of meal tickets for the girls who work in the cafeteria.

Only a place where one has been happy could inspire such affection as the Foyer does. And one is happy here because there is love. Nothing else could hold together such a heterogeneous group as gather under its roof. 'One is not long in the atmosphere of the building before the secret is discovered,' wrote someone. 'Nothing visible, only the universal longing for friendship and companionship. All mingle as one family, where understanding and coöperation are the hidden power.'

In spite of tragedy and the struggle to make ends meet, one cannot but note the cheerfulness on every face, the quiet friendliness of every greeting. Yet, perhaps because the girls are mature beyond their years, there is no meaningless bustle and clamor. Everyone is pressed for time, yet there is restfulness in the atmosphere — something almost of the repose that comes to one after a long journey home.

Unselfishness at the Foyer is as natural and unobtrusive as breathing. 'Madame Hoff has put herself — a large part of her heart there,' said one of the girls, 'and it is easy to walk in her footsteps.... She has taught us to do good to others. And each nationality, no matter which, considers the other as her sister.'

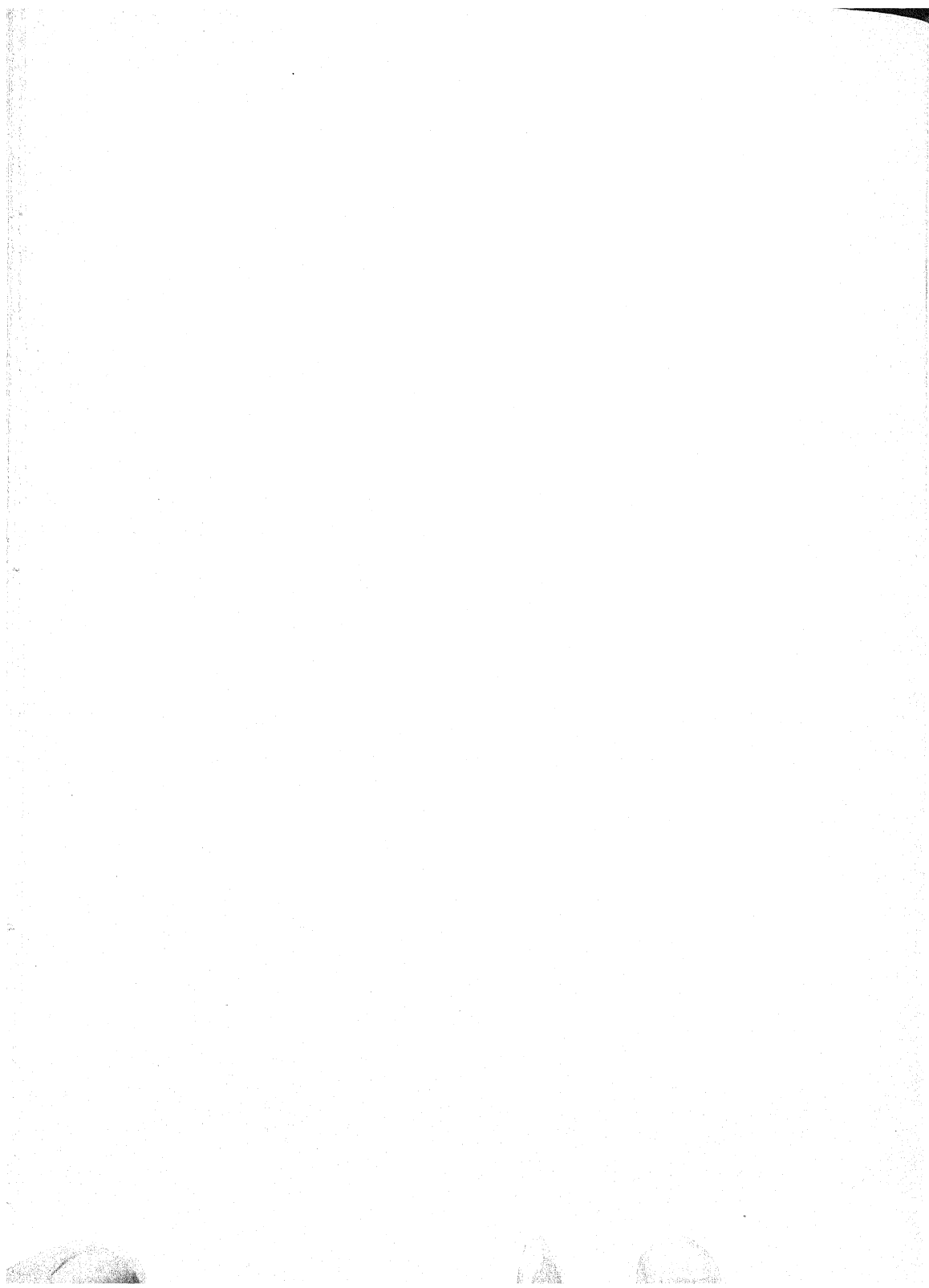
Not only while they are at the Foyer, but after they

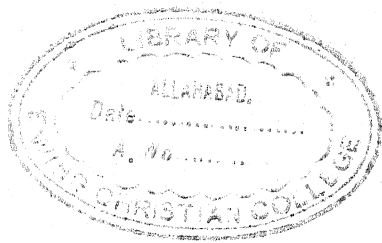
leave, does Mrs. Hoff hold both the girls and the secretaries together, as in one family. Though they scatter to the ends of the earth, she remembers them all. Visits are exchanged in France and in America, and by letter she keeps in touch with their progress. To know, for instance, that eighty-nine former students at the Hostel are university professors or deans is no small satisfaction. And a joy, too, is the news of every engagement and marriage.

When Mrs. Hoff reached America soon after the Foyer was dedicated, the *New York Sun* described her as a woman whose gift for mothering the daughters of forty-nine nations was only surpassed by her ability to organize for high purposes. "The sun never sets on Mrs. Hoff's girls and their good works; and their spiritual mother never loses touch with their activities no matter how far they wander.'

PART IV

The best is yet to be





CHAPTER I

L'AMBASSADRICE

IN DECEMBER after the Foyer was dedicated, Mr. and Mrs. Hoff began one of their periodic journeys back to the homeland. Six months after her marriage, Mrs. Hoff was called home by the death of her father, and throughout the succeeding years she has returned at frequent intervals. Her visits, which at first were in the nature of pilgrimages, came to have something of the character of triumphal tours, as the circle of her friends grew larger and invitations poured in upon her from various parts of the country.

When America entered the War, Mrs. Hoff had spent seventeen years among the French people, and for three years she had devoted herself without ceasing to their cause. Yet she had remained an American in the best sense of the word, and her wide correspondence with American friends had kept her in touch with her native land. Hence, when an international crisis brought the two nations into closer contact, Mrs. Hoff unconsciously became an interpreter of her own people in France and of the French in America.

Bit by bit this rôle grew upon her until she was referred to on more than one occasion as an unofficial representative between the two countries. As an inscription in the guest-book at Peyrieu says, she was '*L'Ambassadrice des Amitiés Internationales.*'

Not that Mrs. Hoff ever entered the arena of politics; her work was always with the individual, and her appeal, though often made from a speaker's platform, was always to the individual. But the number and variety of her contacts in both countries gave her an influence that few people as individuals are able to exert.

She was more than ever hailed as an apostle of internationalism after her gift of the Foyer to the students of all countries. Having brought this *chef d'œuvre* to completion, Mrs. Hoff, instead of enjoying its success in quietude, immediately gathered herself for another effort. Not for her personal pleasure did she plan her trip to America, but impelled by a desire to take a message from France, and also to interest American women in supplying scholarships for girls as well as endowing institutions, intelligent girls who could give vitality to international ideals.

These journeys are always made in the winter months. Instead of relaxing for the voyage, she continues her daily work. Westward, there are preparations to be made for America, and on the return trip there is an accumulation of mail to be taken care of. In 1929 she wrote, 'On the steamer I was able to cancel all my indebtedness, writing a hundred and four letters.'

Every moment of the stay in New York is apportioned with care. A special engagement-pad with five divisions for each day stands always ready in her hotel apartment, and seldom is a space left vacant. Mornings are reserved for personal interviews. During the rest of the day there are organizations to keep in touch with, addresses to make, hospitality of all sorts to accept, and the daily reception hour to maintain for those who wish a word of comfort or advice.

The National Board of Young Women's Christian Associations always claims attention, and in 1929 she addressed its annual meeting on the subject of international work with students. She must visit the Girls' Service Clubs and meet the girl who occupies the room that bears her name. And since 1924, when the International Student Union was organized at Geneva, she carries a message to its winter gathering in New York.

It has long been her custom to hold a series of receptions

for her friends in New York. These hotel gatherings bear the imprint of her personality almost as if they were in her own home at Paris or Peyrieu. The same musicians often perform for her, for, though residents of Europe, they find one American tour a year desirable. There is the same profusion of flowers, and her friends note that smoking conveniences, now an accepted part of women's gatherings, are lacking at her receptions.

Mrs. Hoff has always surrounded herself with flowers and music, yet, as these have never become commonplace to her, they never pass unnoticed. At a reception in New York, for example, the organ music, which to the others served merely as an agreeable background, gave her so much pleasure that she went to the organist afterward and thanked him. On returning to the hotel, she sent him a book of organ music given her by the composer Chaminade.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Hoff are beloved guests at the hotel where they make their home in New York. A favorite anecdote in the family concerns the Irish servant at this hotel, who surprised Mrs. Hoff's secretary by remarking, 'I hope the Lord will give her all the happiness she deserves in heaven, but she gets some of it right now havin' him for a husband.'

In 1923 a mission of friendship and patriotism combined took Mrs. Hoff to Washington. A French sculptress, Madame Berthe Girardet, had made a bust of Jeanne d'Arc as an offering of gratitude from a French woman to the American boys who fought and died in the War. She gave it to the Smithsonian Institution, but, as she was unable to present it herself, she asked her friend, Mrs. Hoff, to undertake the mission for her. The presentation took place on February 23d with a simple but impressive ceremony.

Mrs. Hoff's ability as a public speaker is well known among her acquaintances, and during the three months

spent in America in 1929 she was called upon to make more than one hundred addresses.

Among the many friends who are waiting to greet her are the boys she mothered during the War. They come to see her all along her itinerary, and bring their parents for her to meet. When they are unable to come, they send her presents. Once a turkey and once a fine steak found their way to the hotel, marked for her table.

Upon one occasion, after Mrs. Hoff had been giving an address, a touching note was delivered to her. It contained the record of an American soldier, and a request from his mother that Mrs. Hoff try to locate his grave near Saint-Nazaire in France. The woman had written, 'You know how anxious a mother is to know something about where a dear one's body is, and I do not know many people to ask.'

The record in its simple outline was as touching as the mother's request. It was of an enlisted man selected for promotion — training school, a month at the front, and then his commission; after an interval, another month at the front, the wound, the hospital, death, and a grave unvisited. Simple, but how many times repeated during those frightful years! Upon her return to France, Mrs. Hoff carried out the mother's request and imparted the information to her in a letter.

The climax of each visit to America is the arrival in Detroit and the breathless days that follow. Here are a few people who still remember Mrs. Hoff as a child in a poke bonnet with broad green strings. Here are still a few schoolmates, and others of the Liggett School who remember her as their alumnæ president. Here are members of her old church, old and new friends at the Young Women's Christian Association, and women who attended gospel meetings under her leadership.

There are the blind girl to whom Mrs. Hoff gave her

canary on the day of her wedding, who has been cared for for many years; the elderly couple whose very roof was saved for them; and the two young people who would not have married without her aid. There is a woman who remembers a stormy March night years ago when she stood before the Whitney residence on Woodward Avenue in despair. The house was brilliantly lighted and she had heard that Mrs. Hoff was within the walls. She desperately needed a friend, and, if what the world said was true, she would find one here. Gathering her courage, she mounted the broad steps and pulled the bell. No, she was not turned away. Instead, she was ushered into a room where everything was warm and cheery, and where a gracious and kindly person greeted her. The next moment she found herself in a chair, with her hostess kneeling before her, removing her wet shoes and replacing them with dry ones.

From the moment of Mrs. Hoff's arrival until the train pulls out on the return journey, she is overwhelmed with social attentions and with endless demands upon her time. Yet somehow she finds time to call upon those friends who need her most. Perhaps she will visit a sick-room on the way from one engagement to another, bestow a warm, impulsive greeting, unfasten the flowers from her corsage, and leave them to mingle their fragrance with the memory of her smile. In one home where this happened, long after the violets faded, the knot of ribbon which bound their stems spoke eloquently of the friend who had left it.

When it was impossible for her to call upon a sick friend who remembered her from her graduation day, a bedside telephone was installed that they might exchange a greeting.

In 1927, Mrs. Hoff was invited to a gathering given by the League of Catholic Women to raise money for a girls' home. They knew that her views were non-sectarian, but

when she rose to offer a generous contribution, her gracious words captivated the whole audience. The fact that a Protestant woman could be so broadly sympathetic inspired them to break through long-established barriers. To show their appreciation of Mrs. Hoff, they organized a huge reception, presided over by the Mayor and taken part in by all the organizations of Detroit. It was an extraordinary demonstration.

Mrs. Hoff's devotion to the Detroit Young Women's Christian Association throughout the years of her absence has been remarkable. As its first president she had exerted a kind of leadership new in Association circles, and through her influence it achieved a prominent place among large associations in the country.

When she left in 1900, the organization was handicapped by the lack of a suitable building. In 1904, when she visited Detroit, the building was finished, but still partly unpaid for. Every known resource had been tapped, and the board of directors was at a loss where to turn. Mrs. Hoff was with them when they met at the home of their president to decide whether the building should be dedicated while still in debt. Thirty-five thousand dollars was still lacking. What should they do? Then Mrs. Hoff rose and said: 'We will have the dedication, but it will not be with a debt, for I want the privilege of removing that. My Heavenly Father has given me the desire to do this for Detroit and my earthly father has made it possible.'

Detroit grew so fast that in twenty years a larger building was needed to serve its young women. In 1927, at the beginning of a campaign for funds, Mrs. Hoff conducted a consecration service for the solicitors, and she herself made an initial gift of fifty-five thousand dollars. Later, when the campaign seemed to be falling short of its goal, the committee cabled for her advice. She replied, 'I have faith in the generosity of Detroit.' Immediately after-

ward came the news that two members of the wealthiest family in Detroit had subscribed four hundred thousand dollars each.

The Grace Whitney Hoff Federation is now the focus of Mrs. Hoff's interest in the Young Women's Christian Association. This grew out of the clubs for employed girls which were organized under her guidance many years ago, each large factory or office having its group. In 1908 she suggested that they form a league within the Young Women's Christian Association, and made a substantial contribution to the treasury. As a final injunction she said, 'Let it be understood that the membership to the League is open to all employed young women from the industrial centers, regardless of creed.'

Eight years later this League of employed girls became the Grace Whitney Hoff Federation, and adopted the following creed, written by Howard Arnold Walter:

I would be true, for there are those who trust me.
I would be pure, for there are those who care.
I would be strong, for there is much to suffer.
I would be brave, for there is much to dare.
I would be friend to all — the foe, the friendless.
I would be giving and forget the gift.
I would be humble, for I know my weakness.
I would look up and laugh and love and lift.

As its membership ranged up to one thousand and over, it offered no small responsibility for the girl who became its president. But whoever she was, she always found a wise and helpful friend in Mrs. Hoff.

It would be a pleasure for Mrs. Hoff personally to welcome each year the new groups of members. But even at a distance of several thousand miles, her instinct of hospitality is not to be suppressed. Accordingly, she entertained the girls at a banquet each year in Detroit. Every

two or three years she was actually present as the hostess, but at other times she had to content herself by sending a greeting.

In 1927, she was there in person, and the Federation surprised her with a beautifully bound book, containing a history of their organization and the signatures of more than a thousand members.

In 1929, Mrs. Hoff was again with them for their annual banquet, and a gala occasion it was. The girls counted it blessing enough to have their hostess among them, and they were unprepared for two announcements made during the evening. First she told them of the scholarship she was offering the Federation for twelve months of study and travel in Europe, this scholarship to be given to a member of the Federation chosen by the organization. The second item was announced by the general secretary — Mrs. Hoff's gift of ten thousand dollars 'to furnish and make beautiful for our girls the lounge on the seventh floor of our building.'

Only one thing remained to complete the girls' happiness. In Mr. Hoff, their quiet and kindly host, they had recognized a friend, and after much consultation they approached him with their request.

The furnishings of their lounge could never be complete, they said, without a portrait of Mrs. Hoff.

Considering the matter for a moment, he said it was asking much of Mrs. Hoff to pose for a portrait. The physical strain was not a small matter for one with so many demands on her energy. Their faces fell — here was something they had not thought of. Still, to reassure them, he said that perhaps it could be arranged.

Long before the building was completed, Mr. and Mrs. Hoff were back in France, but they followed with keen interest the events of its opening just a year after the Foyer dedication. The suite on the seventh floor had been

beautifully furnished, the lounge, card-room, music-room, and sun-room, for the use of the Federation clubs. Mrs. Hoff had engaged the Tryon woodcarvers, mountain children from North Carolina, to do the panelling to frame the fireplace and to make the comfortable chairs on either side of it. Thus did this group of girls and boys, trained by one who had loved the Young Women's Christian Association in its earliest years, contribute toward its new home. Moreover, this important order gave them a chance to show to a larger public the practical and artistic work of mountain girls and boys in North Carolina.

Not long after her return from America, Mrs. Hoff was appointed to the World Service Council of the Young Women's Christian Association as the representative of France. The first woman in Europe to serve on this Council, she was well chosen, for its duties were to form a liaison group between the World Committee of the Young Women's Christian Associations, the international organization in London, now located at Geneva, and the American headquarters in New York.

In the spring of 1930, the National Convention of the Young Women's Christian Associations was held in Detroit's new building. Although Mrs. Hoff was unable to be present, she contributed generously to the expenses of the gathering. She was then facing great financial responsibilities in final payments for the Foyer, but her loyalty to the home organization never wavered.

Not until January, 1931, was the finishing touch added to the Federation Lounge in the new Young Women's Christian Association building. Mr. Hoff had engaged the well-known artist, Monsieur Bernard Boutet de Monvel, to carry out the wishes of the girls. Late in 1930, the completed portrait was sent to Detroit, where a frame carved in Tryon awaited it. Monsieur Boutet de Monvel himself went to Detroit to see that it was properly placed

in the panel over the fireplace, and on January 4, 1931, the unveiling took place.

It was just the kind of ceremony she would have approved, wrote a former president of the Federation to Mrs. Hoff. In the friendly lounge, divans were drawn up to the fireplace, while that room and all the adjoining ones were filled with eager girls. 'We reviewed your work and ours from the old days to the present,' she continued. 'It is a living dream, now and always.'

When the moment came for unveiling the portrait, the president of the organization with the six former presidents pulled the white ribbons that lifted the covering, and there, as it seemed, stood Mrs. Hoff among them.

'It seemed as though we were looking, not at a picture, but at you.'

Thus in countless ways has Mrs. Hoff remained a vital influence in her own land. The regard in which she is held there is shown by a letter from a group of her admirers in New York City:

On the eve of your departure for France, we have gathered to wish you a loving *Au Revoir*, and to offer you a token of our regard. We have chosen for our gift a translation from one of France's early authors who so ably wrote on the Noble Art of Diplomacy. We feel the subject is appropriate, for you have been a true envoy from the land of your adoption to the land of your birth.... The book we offer you is inscribed with these words: 'NO MAN LIVETH UNTO HIMSELF.'

The French on their side have not failed to appreciate this American woman who has made her home among them. Not only because she has been generous have they loved her, but because she has understood them. She is unlike the American who wrote her bitterly from Deauville: 'I never want to come back to France. France does not care for us. She only wants our money. I have been here and seen money wasted, spent lavishly. I have yet

to hear a conversation that would be uplifting, and literature that I find on the bookstalls is not fit to be on the family table.'

To this Mrs. Hoff replied simply: 'You will not find the best representative people of France in Deauville. The country is where you find France.'

For this understanding France has been grateful, and has expressed its appreciation in many ways. In her Peyrieu guest-book a distinguished Frenchman has written:

Amerigo Vespucci discovered America! The French people have done more than he in discovering the heart of an American.

The French Minister to Switzerland expressed himself in a similar way at Peyrieu. He had been taken through the Rest Homes, and, after congratulating the young guests and their kindly benefactor, he added, 'But I especially congratulate France in having such a woman as a representative of our sister country, America.'

The first official recognition Mrs. Hoff received was the *Palmes Académiques*, conferred upon her in 1923. This was followed in 1925 by one of the greatest honors France can confer, election to the Legion of Honor. This little slip of red ribbon is coveted by all official and intellectual France, and, outside political circles, sparingly awarded. The news came to Peyrieu as a complete surprise, and probably the person to whom it meant the most was Mr. Hoff. The same distinction had been conferred upon him for valuable services to the French Government during the War; but it had seemed of little moment until Mrs. Hoff joined him among the honored ones of France.

The Cross of the Legion of Honor was conferred upon Mrs. Hoff for her varied services to France; but in special recognition of her work among students a still further

title came to her in June, 1928, when she was made Officier de l'Instruction Publique. This decoration came at the instance of Monsieur Charléty, Rector of the University of Paris, and it was he who conveyed the news to Mrs. Hoff. Thus the purple rosette took its place in the chest that once belonged to Marie Antoinette, where Mrs. Hoff keeps her decorations. Beside it lay the red ribbon of the Legion of Honor, the purple ribbon of the Palmes Académiques, the Order of Queen Elizabeth of Belgium, the Red Cross of Russia, and various military decorations.

In December, 1928, Mrs. Hoff received an invitation symbolic of her position in France. The town of Orly was dedicating a plaque in memory of the American and French aviators who perished on French soil. As this was a tribute to the friendship existing between the two Republics, Mrs. Hoff was chosen to be guest of honor.

The Vicomte de la Tour gave the address of welcome. In describing the benevolence of their honored guest, which knows '*ni limite ni frontier,*' he said:

The Government of the Republic, in conferring upon you the National Order of the Legion of Honor, has discerned and distinguished in you, Madame, the prototype of the '*aide Américaine.*'

As another discriminating Frenchman has said of her:

Madame Hoff's sympathy for France is of a special kind. In everything that she does for this country, she shows the finesse and delicacy that appeal to the French, with their fourteen centuries of tradition and history behind them. We respond to noble acts performed in a noble manner....

The people of this great new country [America] are built on a grand scale, like the land itself — they are incapable of doing things in a small way, so their philanthropy like themselves is great....

I have the greatest personal admiration of her character. Essentially a good woman, very simple and at the same

time possessed of a rare intelligence, she has the brain of a man without losing any of the delicate qualities of a woman — again a combination of gifts that is possessed in a rare degree by American women.

Certainly there exists a special bond of sympathy between this American woman and her adopted country, while the original bond between her and her native land has been strengthened and not diminished throughout the years. Thus, through Mrs. Hoff many people on each side of the Atlantic have caught a glimpse into the heart of those who live across the sea. Not between governments but between peoples has she performed the mission of *l'Ambassadrice*.

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL LIFE AND FRIENDS

It is a good thing to be rich and a good thing to be strong,
but it is a better thing to be loved of many friends.

EURIPIDES

WHEN Mrs. Hoff went to Paris as a bride in 1900, the French capital was the center of a brilliant but exclusive society. For a foreigner, and especially an American, to win a place in the inner circle was rare.

Mrs. Hoff was a comparative stranger in Paris, having come from a town where everyone knew her to a cosmopolitan city where she had but few acquaintances. Social life, as such, she neither sought nor avoided, but the lesson she had learned at Hellmuth College was never forgotten. She had learned that in her friends lay her happiness, and as her service knew no boundaries, her friendships, too, were universal. She was neither too proud nor too humble for any class of society.

'I love to meet people,' she has said. 'It is one of my relaxations.'

The story of her years in France is an interesting study in the conquests of a noble heart. There was no storming of the citadel, no deliberate siege of any quarter. When she arrived, she took her place quietly among the American colony, devoting herself to the work of the American Church and to the study of possibilities for service in her adopted country. In her own home she held a morning Bible class each week, conducted by a clergyman. She also began to indulge her taste for music and art — a taste which had not had full scope in Detroit, but which blossomed in Paris like a plant in its native soil.

Little by little she gathered about her a group of men

and women who enjoyed the arts as she did, and the salon of Madame Hoff was soon noted for its superior entertainment. Many times she presented artists of world-wide fame, but it gave her even greater pleasure to introduce a young artist whose star she felt was just beginning to rise.

With each new interest that she acquired in France, the number and variety of her friends increased. Le Bréau, with its autumn festivities, brought new acquaintances, and Peyrieu, with its proximity to other châteaux and to Aix-les-Bains, did the same. The British-American Young Women's Christian Association brought her in touch with a group of prominent English women, while the Student Hostel led to academic contacts in France and other countries.

But the War more than anything else brought her to an eminent place in French society. If any of the more conservative had been inclined to look upon her merely as an 'American heiress,' her devotion to France during those years broke down their defenses. Madame Whitney-Hoff became widely known as an able and sympathetic woman, and a friend of their country.

Two of her earliest friends in the *élite* of musical circles were Massenet and Madame Chaminade. The former was a simple, friendly man, always ready to help a struggling musician. Because of Mrs. Hoff's interest in students of all types, many a young singer was launched toward success through their joint efforts; and thus the acquaintance between them ripened into friendship.

Massenet brought the best artists from the opera to her salon; at the Student Hostel he arranged entertainments, and by his interest encouraged the music students to greater effort. The *carillon* he composed for Peyrieu was his last act of friendship for Mrs. Hoff. His health was beginning to decline, and in 1912 he died. Madame

Louise Massenet, his charming wife, survived him, and is still among the circle of Mrs. Hoff's friends.

Madame Chaminade, gentle and sensitive despite her great fame, entertained for Mrs. Hoff several times and was quick to appreciate her charm. After seventeen months of mourning, it was in Mrs. Hoff's salon that Madame Chaminade made her reappearance in the world; and on the eve of a tour through America, she appealed to her American friend for advice. Later she dedicated to her a religious composition, 'Meditation.'

During the years that followed the Armistice, Madame Chaminade felt the grief and terror of disillusionment. Writing Mrs. Hoff after a protracted illness, she said:

I long, dear friend, to have a soul so serious and valiant as yours. Since the close of this frightful War, it seems that everything is poisoned.

One had hoped better, and our dear dead who have bought with their blood this sad victory must suffer strangely on account of the uselessness of their sacrifice.... If you have a little moment to devote to me, dear friend, tell me your thoughts and reassure me if you can, you who are always strong in spite of all!

Again she wrote:

I confess that before all the accumulated ugliness that we note daily, I lose hope, and I find that it was well to live during the years of the War in spite of the frightful torment that the nations brought on themselves. It was horrible, but it was grand.

Then she spoke of a vulgar travesty that an American publisher was bringing out distorting her best composition. With words and orchestration that would defame her art, the piece would probably amuse the dance-hall audiences for whom it was designed.

Pardon this long letter [she concluded], which perhaps I should not write you, but you know what to say with so much

tact and heart that I have spoken to you as I have spoken to no one else.

Explaining the matter further in another letter she said:

The greatest artists have had to submit to being ill-treated by the press and our great Massenet received the finest collection of anonymous letters and of questionable compliments that he called 'the bitterness of glory.' Rostand and Loti have not managed without it. It cannot, therefore, enter into my thought to complain to the world and to escape criticism, but here is a matter which no longer has to do with a mere criticism in a periodical. I ask if it is permitted to perpetrate such publicity?

As fortune would have it, the editor who was to publish this piece was not only a fellow-citizen of Detroit, but a friend of the Whitney family. Writing him immediately, Mrs. Hoff presented Madame Chaminade's side of the case so persuasively that the publication was stopped, despite the fact that its sale was expected to bring in thousands of dollars.

Later, from her quiet refuge in Provence, she asked Mrs. Hoff to send a photograph of herself, 'small or large, providing that it is like you!' When the gift came, Madame Chaminade placed it at once on her piano, where it might preside over her work. Speaking of a new collection of organ music which her publisher had just released, she added: 'This religious music is my passion at the present moment. In my childhood I began to write hymns and chants. Since then I have written nothing of that kind, but now that my latter days have arrived, I take up again my first ideas.'

Among Mrs. Hoff's artist guests appear many other familiar names. Fritz Kreisler and Albert Spalding have graced her salon, not once but many times. After the War, when Kreisler as a rule did not appear in private homes, he made an exception of Mr. and Mrs. Hoff because of

their long-standing friendship. Reynaldo Hahn arranged a delightful entertainment for Mrs. Hoff, presenting his own compositions. The house was decorated in the period of Louis XV and Mrs. Hoff herself wore a gown to harmonize with the programme.

Raoul Pugno frequently gave piano recitals for her, and on one occasion was found sitting in the library, turning a certain book in his hand. 'One would not have to look at this book to appreciate its exquisite workmanship,' he said. 'I like to hold it like this; it gives me pleasure.'

Marcel Grandjany, a harpist and composer, was presented by Mrs. Hoff both in Paris and in New York. One of his compositions, *Pièce Romantique*, is dedicated to her, and was played for the first time in 1928 at one of her Paris receptions.

Souvenir de Peyrieu, by the pianist, Pierre Revel, is also dedicated to her. Revel, who spends the summer not far from Peyrieu, has often played at the château and has fallen under the spell of its stately charm.

Other well-known names among her musical friends are those of René LeRoy, the brilliant flutist; Madame Litvinne, the soloist; Georges Enesco, violinist; Joseph Hollmann, 'cellist; Harold Bauer, who gave his services once to the International Student Union; Guy Maier and Lee Pattison, who entertained the soldiers so valiantly during the War; and Marguerite Coquelet, the distinguished harpist of Paris. Mademoiselle Coquelet not only appears in Mrs. Hoff's Paris salon, but each summer she spends a month at the Peyrieu Rest Homes. Here in the mediæval setting she entertains the friends that summer brings to the château and Rest Homes and has established music centers in the villages throughout the Peyrieu district.

'I have always believed in fairies,' wrote one guest after a musicale at the château, 'and now I know the



To dear Mrs Hoff -
from his devoted friend
Albert Spalding
New York 1927

ALBERT SPALDING

Recital M. KREISLER

1. a. Prélude } mi majeur . . . BACH
 b. Gavotte }
 2. a. Mélodie GLUCK
 b. La Précieuse COUPERIN
 c. La Chasse CARTIER
 d. Variations TARTINI
 3. a. Lied ohne Worte . . . MENDELSON
 b. Moment Musical SCHUBERT
 c. Sérénade Espagnole . . . CHAMINADE
 4. a. Caprice Viennois KREISLER
 b. Deux vieilles valse Viennoises KREISLER
 1. *Liebesleid*. - 2. *Liebesfrud*

Au piano d'accompagnement, **M. E. WAGNER**



MATINÉE DU VENDREDI 17 MAI 1907.

RÉCITAL — M^{rs} RAOUL PUGNO

- I -
- Gigue BACH
 Gavotte variée HANDEL
 Pièce en La SCARLATTI
 Sonate en ut dièse mineur BEETHOVEN
- II -
- 1^{re} Ballade CHOPIN
 Nocturne en fa dièse " "
 Valse en La bémol " "
 Polonaise op. 22 " "
- III -
- Au soir SCHUMANN
 Rondo brillant WEBER
 Papillons GRIGI
 Au Printemps " "
 Sérénade à la Lune RAOUL PUGNO
 XI^e Rhapsodie LISZT

PROGRAMME

M. Albert SPALDING

- I.
 a) Sonate en ré CORELLI
 Grave - Allegro - Moderato
 Adagio - Allegro.
 b) Pastorale Gentile FRESCOBALDI
 c) Chorale BACH
- II.
 a) Romance en Sol BEETHOVEN
 b) Wallz BRAHMS
 c) A la Fontaine SCHUMANN
- III.
 a) La Fille au Cheveux de Lin DEBUSSY
 b) Minstrelles DEBUSSY
 c) Jota DE FALLA
 d) Romanza Andaluza SARASATE

M. ANDRÉ BENOIST
 au piano

Le 8 Mai 1907.

belief to be well founded, and that the gracious hostess standing at the head of the stairs was indeed the Fairy Queen who wafted her guests into an enchanted garden. There was never a more beautiful setting for lovely music and I am sure each artist was inspired by it.'

In describing her appreciation of Mrs. Hoff, Mademoiselle Coquelet has said:

For twelve years I only saw her when I played in her home. Then I found her very lovely, but I did not know her. It was only when I came here [Peyrieu] the first time that I discovered Madame Hoff. She is incomparable.... She is a genius in loving.... If those who come to Le Moulin for a month live to be eighty years old, none of them will ever forget her.... She is infinitely good and very religious, which is the motive of her goodness. She understands; she is altogether simple and affable.

Madame Hoff loves the harp. When I play, it is for her only. If it pleases her, that is all I desire.

'You have such poise,' a friend once said to Mademoiselle Coquelet.'

'If I have,' she replied, 'it is because I have learned it from Madame Hoff.'

It is said in Paris that Mrs. Hoff's name is an open sesame. Many young musicians have found that, after playing in her salon, engagements have followed. And all, whether at the beginning or at the height of their career, enjoy playing in the atmosphere that she creates. As one distinguished pianist has said:

She surrounds herself in a gathering with an atmosphere of love, as it were, an atmosphere which no one else of my acquaintance ever has the power to produce in a salon. She allows the artist perfect ease to express himself, and seems to understand his deepest feelings, that inner language of the soul, so that one can only give of one's best.

I have the feeling that she understands the feelings of an artist just as completely as if she were going to play herself;

WHITNEY HOFF

on of his music on the public, and the before and after playing. And the way audience quiet! One never finds that

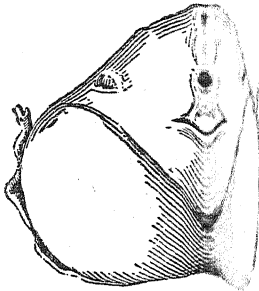
his hopes for developing American is artist writes: 'I cannot separate and happiness from you. You have on of my life.'

that a brilliant student at the in Fontainebleau confessed to the abandon her career. Her money nothing to do but leave. In a few to her with the news that he had who would see that she finished her months the girl did not know who, but, when she insisted on know- learned that it was Mrs. Hoff.

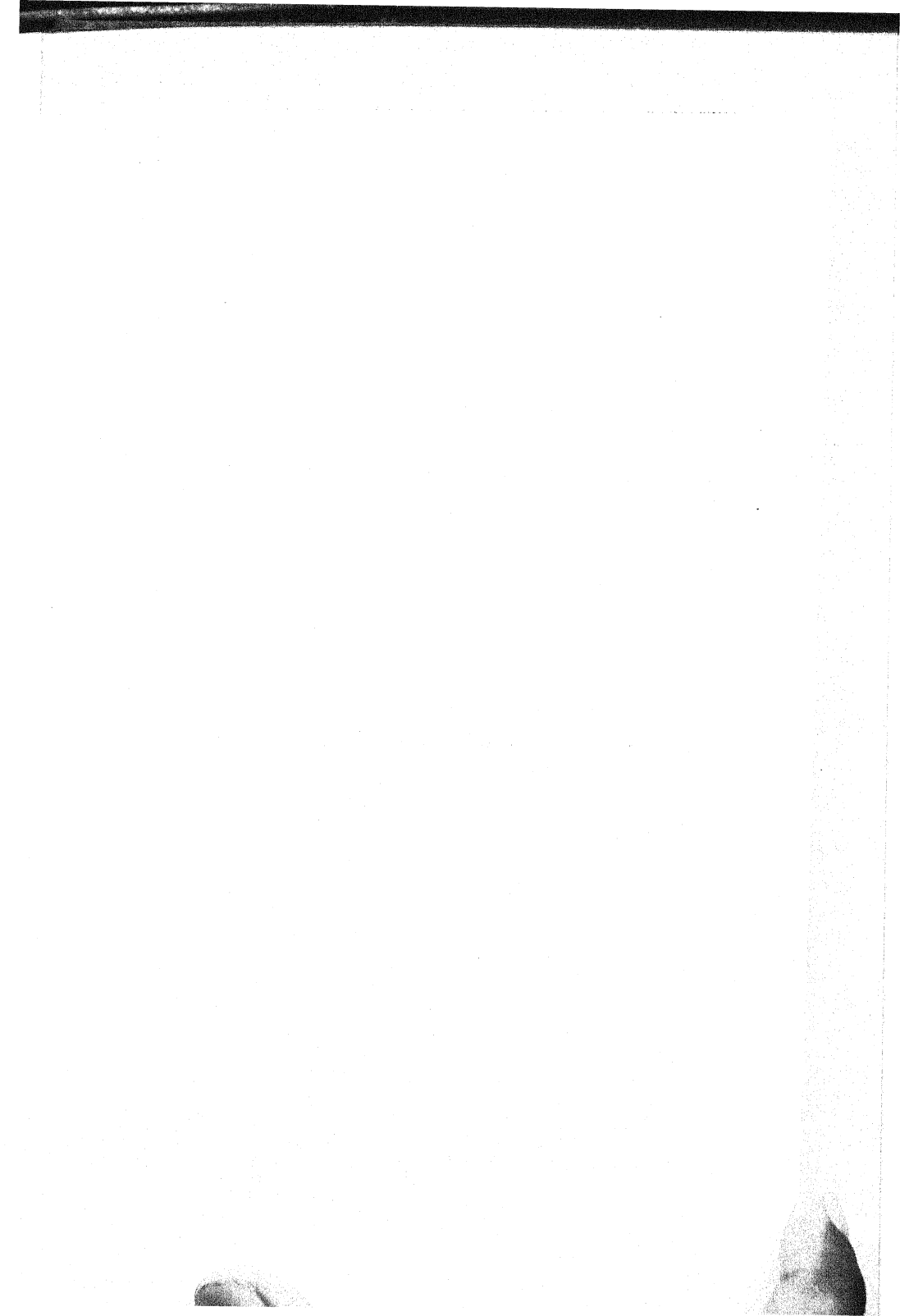
at of an opera singer who made a popular rôle, but as the styles If unable to provide the requisite engagements. A friend appealed If:

e years since I saw you first, eager to like of them useful men and women. ance and admired. In all that time, d while I have watched others strugg- ve never turned to you, though well rosity, to ask you to help anyone. u about a plucky woman who is in a ill know it is because I feel the per- es extraordinary. What could this small town in America, if she were i trained to sing, not teach. I feel ew thousand francs gotten together aracter, perhaps a life. Will you

DE FRANCE

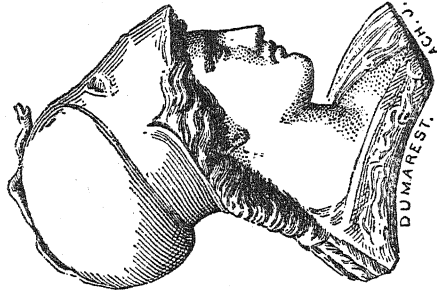


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DE FRANCE



ACADEMIE DES

BEAUX-ARTS

Madame

Paris le 24 juillet 1892

Au nom des quatre jeunes pensionnaires auxquelles votre
bienveillance permet d'adresser leurs épreuves, je viens vous
exprimer notre gratitude.

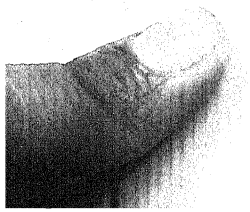
Nous comédions sous le prix de votre présence en l'événement
dans les années sociales. Elle aussi, l'auteur de *Fontainebleau*
est d'intérêt social (et artistique) pour les deux pays.

C'est vous dire combien nous sommes touchés de votre
dévotion ainsi que de votre sympathie si noble et si de vous
collaboration...

Je salue, Madame, que vous n'avez bien, cet hiver,
dans le grand salon (1^{er} du mois, 12 h.), lesquels recommencent
en novembre - trois quart d'heure de musique et une table de
nous serons infiniment reconnaissants de votre présence que
synthèse l'art et le cœur.

Au plus respectueusement vôtre! Vos musiciens

Widor



The prompt response to this letter relieved the singer's most desperate need, and, as has happened with many others, good fortune seemed to follow. Sufficient engagements assured her success. Yet the secret was not really good luck — it was hope and confidence restored.

Among the many art and music students who flock to Paris each year are always some who have a letter to Mrs. Hoff. Those whom she has helped before spread the gospel of her kindness. They know that no better guardian can be found in Paris than Mrs. Hoff, and they know that she always has room for one more fledgling under her wing.

While Ridgway Knight was visiting the Student Hostel, his picture, 'The Orphan,' then at the Salon, was mentioned. He admitted laughingly that the poor girl was not an orphan in reality and entertained the students recounting the story of the sad-faced French girl who was one of his models. Later it developed that the portrait was purchased by the King of Siam. When all arrangements were concluded at the Siamese Embassy, Mr. Knight inquired why His Majesty had selected the most mournful picture in the Salon. The reply was, 'His Majesty's wives at home have heard how much liberty European women have and how much happier they are, and he is taking back this picture to show how unhappy they look.'

In Mrs. Hoff's salon hangs a picture by Marcius Simon with a light always shining on it from above. In the foreground is a neglected and weed-grown graveyard under a pall of heavy cloud. But as the weeds pierce the misty barrier, they emerge into a place of radiance where Christ walks and gathers from them immortal flowers.

When Mrs. Hoff first saw this picture, it was in the artist's studio nearing completion. As she entered, he was trying to catch the likeness of a vision that had come to him, for that was his method of creation.

'Ah, Madame Hoff,' he cried upon seeing her, 'you are the one to tell me what I am painting.'

'Our sorrows in Christ's hand become immortal flowers,' she answered instantly.

When she acquired the painting after the artist's death, she found those words carved in the frame. Their meaning has been further elaborated in verse by that beloved pastor of the Student Quarter in Paris, Ernest W. Shurtleff:

That wondrous picture haunts me still,
 The graves, the desert cold,
 The sunset light that breaks the chill
 With evening's tides of gold.
 Gaunt weeds that from their mould arise,
 Pierce through the clouds above,
 And reach the calm of God's clear skies,
 Where smiles the God of Love:
 His touch — the weeds burst into bloom
 Through all that Holy Place!
 God's acre, from its desert gloom,
 Gives Heaven this new-born grace!
 I see the lines which faith hath scanned
 Above those radiant bowers,
 Which tell, 'Our sorrows in Christ's hand
 Become immortal flowers.'

Monsieur Bernard Boutet de Monvel, who painted Mrs. Hoff's portrait for the Grace Whitney Hoff Federation, came from a family that had been acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. Hoff. The elder Boutet de Monvel set the fashion in French illustrations for children, and many Boston residents will recall an exhibition of these paintings held there more than a quarter of a century ago. Associated with these in the minds of many are his pictures of the life of Jeanne d'Arc.

Of his wife, who survived him for many years, Mrs. Hoff once wrote:

My precious friend, Madame Boutet de Monvel, is one of the characters of France. She has retained her individuality

of other days, and dresses as she did fifty years ago. When she enters my salon, you are conscious of a strong personality. I have enjoyed close companionship with her for many years. I always feel that I know France of other days through her experience, and this has been a preparation for usefulness, for we still have in France families who have not acceded to modern ways. I must adapt myself to their environment, which I do gladly.

At an exhibition at the Salon, Mrs. Hoff made one of her most highly esteemed friends. She was standing in front of a beautiful marble group, a father, a mother, and a child in prayer. The print of poverty marked each face, and a single loaf of bread lay before them on the table. 'Give us this day our daily bread,' was the title. Almost in tears at the pathetic representation, Mrs. Hoff turned to the person beside her and saw a charming little woman looking intently into her face.

'Is it not beautiful?' inquired Mrs. Hoff.

After a moment's hesitation, the woman replied, 'It is my work, Madame.' This was Madame Berthe Girardet herself. A tie of sympathy drew these two together, for each found that the other lived in the service of love.

The marble group near which these two first met is now in the Detroit Art Museum as a gift from Mrs. Hoff and a recently completed bust by Madame Girardet of her beloved friend has taken its place in the salon at Château du Bréau.

One of the earliest friendships Mrs. Hoff formed in the academic world was with Professor Emile Boutroux, of the Thiers Fondation and a philosopher of note. Bergson as a young man had sat at his feet. '*Il est mon élève,*' Boutroux has said proudly of his famous pupil.

Madame Boutroux, a cousin of Poincaré, was a gifted and intelligent woman. A true co-worker with her husband, she has ably translated his works into English.

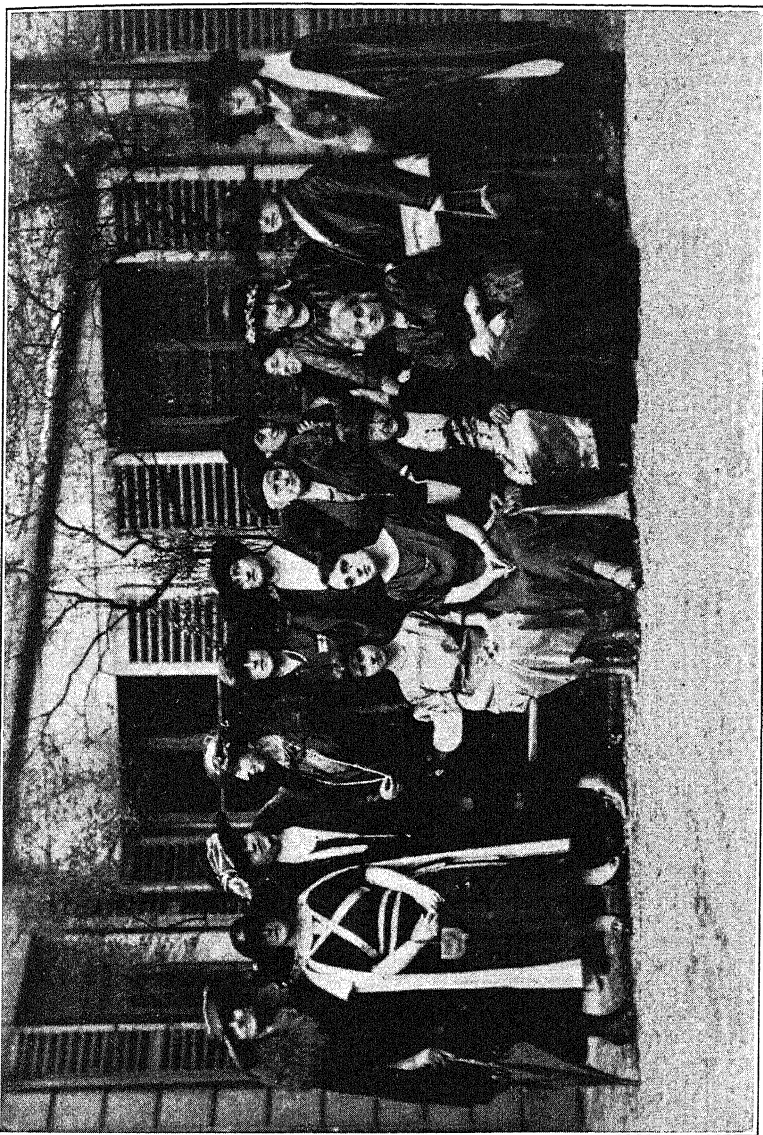
Of her philosophical friend, Mrs. Hoff tells a little anecdote. He and his wife were on a visit to Peyrieu and he had requested a few hours in the morning for study. When he appeared in the course of the forenoon and was asked how he had slept the previous night, he replied: '*Je n'ai pas dormi, je n'ai pas travaillé* (I have neither slept nor have I worked). It is too beautiful!'

He confessed himself distracted by the handsome tapestries and carved furniture in his room. 'All that I need for my best work,' he said, 'is a pine table and a chair.'

Another valued friend of Mr. and Mrs. Hoff is Monsieur Louis Batiffol, the historian and writer, administrator of that great library, the Arsenal. Under his keeping are numberless treasures, case upon case of rare editions and precious bindings. He is an authority on the history and culture of France during the eighteenth century, and is himself a stylist of exceptional purity in speech and writing.

Through him Mrs. Hoff has gained a greater appreciation of French literature than before and an acquaintance with French masters whose names are little known. Madame Batiffol is likewise a scholar and they, together with Mr. and Mrs. Hoff, have had many stimulating conversations — of books, of the history of France, and of France's heroes and heroines.

Vicomte Charles du Peloux is one of those who appreciate Mrs. Hoff. He is a student of the eighteenth century, and in gratitude for her interest and encouragement he has dedicated his latest work to her. This book, following his earlier studies of French art in the eighteenth century, gives a comprehensive account of the painters, designers, sculptors, and engravers of that period, with contemporary data and a bibliography of more than three thousand titles as a guide to further study.



GROUP OF LEADERS IN CHARITY WORK, PARIS

Mrs. Hoff, third from left; fourth, La Duchesse de Vendôme, sister of the King of Belgium



During Mrs. Hoff's early work with students, the former Rector of the University of Paris was a great inspiration. A man of strong character, Monsieur Paul Appell has left his imprint on the educational center of France and on many an individual. Both he and his successor, Monsieur Sebastien Charléty, have had a keen appreciation for what Americans are doing in the educational field to strengthen Franco-American relations.

One of the warmest and most enduring friendships that Mrs. Hoff reaped from the War was with Henriette, La Duchesse de Vendôme, and sister of the King of Belgium. Her Royal Highness's great philanthropy was with the War children of Northern France and the acquaintance began through Mrs. Hoff's interest in that part of France. Mademoiselle Léonie de Teincey, lady-in-waiting to the Duchesse, is in close relationship with Mrs. Hoff. She, too, has become a devoted friend.

'You bring good fortune to the works in which you are interested,' Mademoiselle de Teincey once wrote to Mrs. Hoff, expressing the sentiment of many others.

Since the Duc de Vendôme's death, the friendship between the Duchesse and Mrs. Hoff has gained in tenderness.

As a prominent member of the American colony in Paris, Mrs. Hoff has always been on friendly terms with the American Ambassadors. Horace Porter, who held the post until 1905, signified his deep interest in various works organized by Mrs. Hoff. The charming Mr. and Mrs. Robert Bacon have often been guests in Mrs. Hoff's salon. But of them all probably Myron T. Herrick has come closest to their hearts, for he served more years in Paris than any of the others; and his steadfastness at the outbreak of the War impressed Mr. and Mrs. Hoff with special force, for they, too, stood by to the end.

Mr. Herrick's comment is characteristic of this great

diplomat, 'Perhaps a dead ambassador in Paris is better than a live one in Bordeaux.'

A few months before the outbreak of the War, a curious incident occurred at Peyrieu. Ambassador and Mrs. Herrick and Ambassador David Jayne Hill were guests at the château, and while they were seated round the luncheon table, a regiment of soldiers burst into view across the park. It was merely a sham battle that disturbed the peace of that summer day, but Mr. Herrick rose and said jovially: 'If there ever is a war, we will come back to defend beautiful Peyrieu.'

In what a short time afterward was it necessary to place a seal upon the door of the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Hoff in Paris and a label reading, 'Property of the United States of America'!

Of the French diplomatic circles, one of Mrs. Hoff's dearest friends is the Vicomtesse de Fontenay, wife of the French Ambassador to the Vatican. Her health is precarious and her social duties in Rome leave little time or strength for visiting. Yet, even when the two are unable to meet for long intervals, a warm correspondence continues without interruption.

During the gay season of September, when the châteaux in the neighborhood of Peyrieu throw open their doors, Mrs. Hoff spends much of her time in the pleasant exchange of hospitality. As she once wrote an American friend, 'I am always touched by the loving welcome we have received from the French people and we on our part reciprocate their affection.'

One of the most famous châteaux of this vicinity is that of the de Menthon family on Lac d'Annecy. Perched on a high cliff among the mountains, it is still almost inaccessible except on foot.

Centuries ago, so says the family tradition, Bernard de Menthon was to be married, but the night before the day



AMBASSADOR MYRON T. HERRICK

Paris, August 11, 1914

Mrs. Grace Whitney Hoff,
Chateau Peyrieu,
Peyrieu, (Ain).

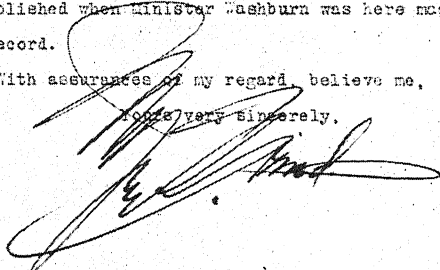
Dear Mrs. Hoff:

I wish to thank you for your most generous offer regarding the Student Hostel, which has been submitted to the Committee for its consideration and action.

If the war lasts six months, the Ambulance Association will require half a million dollars or more. I would suggest that you, in your own way, encourage people in America to contribute liberally to this cause, the value of which you appreciate. As you know, the American Ambulance established when Miss Star Washburn was here made a splendid record.

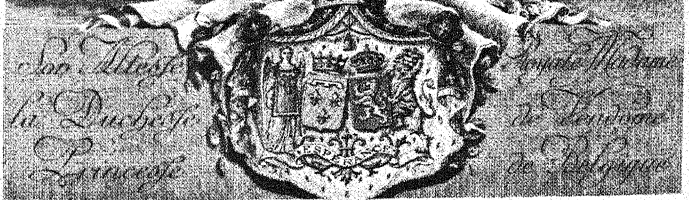
With assurances of my regard, believe me,

Yours very sincerely,



*I try to not be partisan and hope
I succeed but it is difficult
I wish Mrs. Hoff were here but she is not*

FACSIMILE OF LETTER FROM AMBASSADOR HERRICK



*To my dear Mr Hoff in tribute of all my most
affectionate gratitude*

Henriette

Paris May 1921

LA DUCHESSE DE VENDÔME
Sister of the King of Belgium



*A ma chère amie Madame Whitney Hall
Grande Vicomtesse de Fontenay
Rome 1931. Wm de Fontenay*

LA VICOMTESSE DE FONTENAY
Wife of French Ambassador to the Vatican



ALIX GRACE LABOUCHERE
Thirteen years





MRS. HOFF
From portrait by Corcos (Italian artist)



set for the wedding, he leaped from the window of the château and escaped to Switzerland, where he devoted his life to the poor. Larousse states:

Saint Bernard de Menthon was the founder of the Convents of the Great and Small Saint Bernard (Switzerland). Menthon was the location of a manor in the middle ages, which was raised to a barony by Charles the Eighth and to a marquiseate by Louis the Twelfth. Château of the twelfth century.

That all branches of this illustrious family did not share Saint Bernard's views on the question of celibacy is evidenced by the fact that recently a de Menthon daughter celebrated her wedding in the village church, which ceremony was attended by the *châtelains* of Peyrieu, who with the other guests climbed the precipitous rocks to the old château to participate in the further festivities.

Like the Hospices of Saint Bernard, founded by Saint Bernard de Menthon, to which many mountain travelers owe their lives, the Château de Peyrieu is also a giver of life in its own way. How many travelers have left its door renewed and refreshed! From an American friend who visited there came the words:

How I enjoyed it all and appreciate the simplicity and sincerity of the real life of you two delightful people! The joy of it will never leave me. My heart is lightened and my courage grows. It was with you that my sadness began to fade and joy and hope to reign. I received blessings in that Renaissance room and sweet sleep in that regal bed. In many weeks I have not slept as I did last night. So you see, Peyrieu and my hosts gave me more than material gifts.

Friends who have visited Peyrieu often ask if they may bring others to enjoy its beauties. Always the new friends are received with the same warmth as the old; and thus the circle grows until its number is legion. Among them are found General Balfourier of the courtly manners, representing the military organizations of Saint-Cyr;

Madame Georges Leygues, wife of the Minister of the Marine; Emma Eames; and, in the days before the great tragedy, Princesse Paley, wife of the Grand Duke Paul of Russia.

Those friends who have influenced Mrs. Hoff most have been women devoted in their various ways to the service of others. Anna Bowman Dodd, with her brilliant mind and thorough knowledge of France, was a great stimulus. And of Mrs. E. H. Harriman, one of New York's great and wise philanthropists, Mrs. Hoff has said, 'She has been a giver on a larger scale, but her practical advice has given me new points of view on the art of giving.'

Three women stand out from all the rest, two American and one French. 'Probably the acquaintance and friendship with Helen Gould, Grace Dodge, and Madame Jules Siegfried,' Mrs. Hoff once said, 'have been among the most vital influences of my life. I admired them personally before I knew them and then found that personal acquaintance confirmed all my conceptions.'

She first met Helen Gould in Paris. She was a regular attendant one winter at the morning Bible class in her Paris home. What Mrs. Hoff admired in her most was the modest way in which she served.

'One of the sweetest memories is of the day she spent at Château du Bréau, part of which was spent in our chapel, planning an hour of prayer. It was a beautiful incident.'

'Grace Dodge's great executive power,' continued Mrs. Hoff, 'was the first thing that appealed to me. I admired a woman who could grasp large situations and have far visions and yet keep the atmosphere of true womanliness about her.'

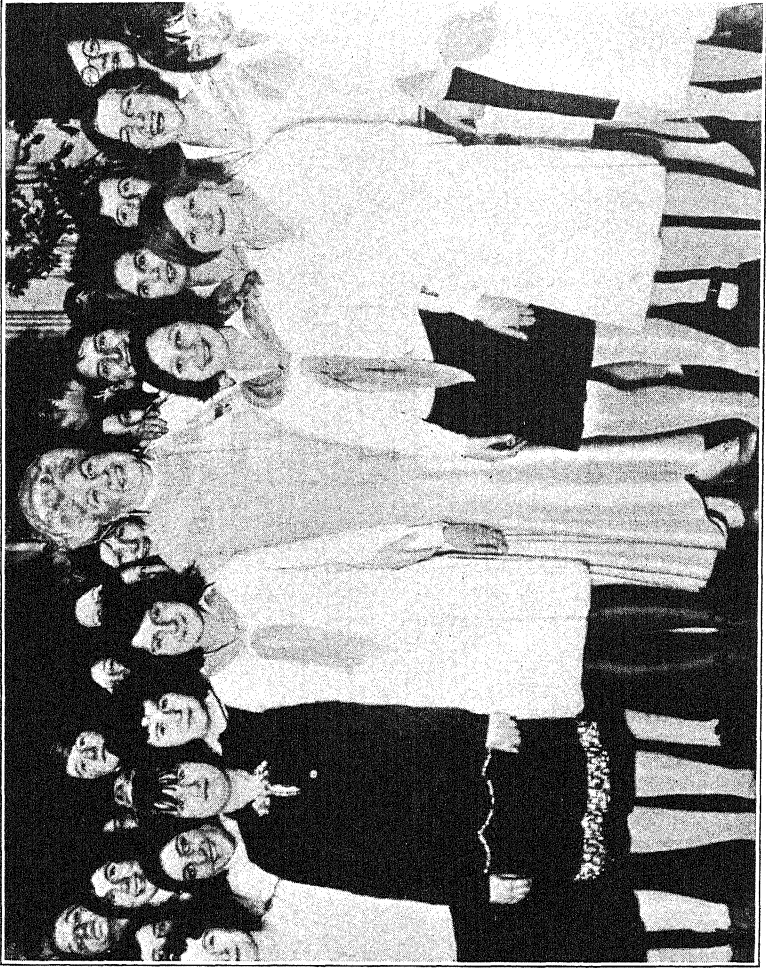
The third member of this group, Madame Jules Siegfried, belonged to that famous French Protestant family which has produced noble minds for generations.

'She is one of the rarest women who have lived in France



To dear Mrs. Whitney - As a personal
remembrance of "Elsa" of "Hansin"
of
Emma Eames

EMMA EAMES AS 'ELSA'



MRS. HOFF AND GROUP OF YOUNGER GIRLS OF GRACE WHITNEY HOFF FEDERATION, DETROIT

within the last two decades,' declared Mrs. Hoff. 'I could always feel her presence in a room. In executive ability she was like Grace Dodge, but possibly she did not grasp the initiative as quickly. Her works show how deep was her understanding of the needs of motherhood and of young women. Her counsel was always sought for, listened to, and followed. I have been present at meetings where the entire spirit was changed just by one spoken word from Madame Siegfried, turned from possible disaster to a successful issue.'

That Madame Siegfried responded to the charm of this gracious American is shown by a letter written to Mrs. Hoff many years ago:

It would have been a joy to visit you this week. I would have been delighted to see again your luminous smile which finds its source in divine love. I would have told you how I love your collection of thoughts ['Message for Today'] which responds so much to mine, and I would have said 'Thank you' for that afternoon spent at your beautiful home in the midst of roses and *objets d'art*. But I proposed and God disposed. I write you from my bed, where I have been for several days, and when I am cured, which will be soon, you will have left for the country.

Mrs. Hoff was often a guest at the Siegfried home, and of its hospitality she has said:

No more gracious hostess could be found in Paris; her home door was always open, and my interviews alone with her have deepened my knowledge of France and the French people.

There was a calm persuasiveness in her character that won the love of those who touched her life.

With all the abundance of her nature, Mrs. Hoff loves people. Her friends have been her life. Without them her character might have been far different. Certainly her desire to serve humanity would have been far less effective. For it is not humanity in the abstract that she has served. It is, and always will be, her friends.

CHAPTER III

THE HOME-MAKER AT HOME

ONE day in New York, Mrs. Hoff received a telephone call. Her secretary replied to it, 'Mrs. Hoff is very busy.'

'I just want to ask one question,' came a woman's voice. 'Is she real?'

Even to those who have met her, she sometimes seems like a myth, as if she dwelt on Olympian heights, coming to earth on errands of mercy and retiring again to the clouds. But those who have been privileged to see into the inner places of her life have found a very real and human person.

'O woman of many homes!' she has been called, because of the homes she has built for others. But of all those she has created, the best has been her own; and, despite her many activities, this has always held first place.

Notwithstanding its luxury and comforts, hers is not a typical modern home. The visitor is impressed by the simple, old-fashioned pieties, the love of children, and the atmosphere of genuineness that surrounds it.

In private or public life Mrs. Hoff has never lacked the courage to be called old-fashioned. At her own table wine is rarely served except in deference to guests, and it is not to be had at the Student Center in Paris, nor in the Rest Homes. Nor is smoking tolerated at the Student Foyer within walls. When the building was dedicated, a prayer was substituted for the usual ceremony of drinking to its success in champagne or wine.

Modern entertainment she does not care for, and it is her rule never to be absent from her Paris home at meal-time.

She is never happier than in her own home, and, when

her daughter's family is gathered about her, her cup of contentment is overflowing. Not long ago she wrote of the summer that had passed: 'We have had a wonderful holiday together. As I approach the allotted span of life, I cling to every opportunity to be near to those I love.'

Her only daughter, Elaine, was married in 1909 to Albert E. Labouchere. Although at first Mrs. Hoff must have felt her loss keenly, in the end she gained not only a delightful son-in-law, but four grandchildren who adore her.

The bridegroom came from a family that has been prominent for generations in social and financial circles of Europe. One ancestor was among the French Huguenots who escaped from the South of France during the religious persecutions. Another took refuge in England, while a third remained hidden in France. Thus arose the three present branches of the family.

Mrs. Hoff's first grandchild, Ernest Albert, was born in 1911, on his mother's birthday. Charles David was born two years later, Alix Grace in 1917, and Robert Eugene in 1922. The children are often with their grandparents in Paris and at Château du Bréau, but it is the summer months at Château de Peyrieu that bring them closest together.

'My loved ones come to grandmother with their joys and their problems,' wrote Mrs. Hoff one summer. 'My greatest blessing in life is their love, and the devotion they show me in their daily lives.'

Another member of the household who has become like one of the family is 'Miss Frances,' small and quiet but indispensable. Years ago, while still a girl in Detroit, she was invited to live in the family as Elaine's companion. In 1900 she came to France with Mrs. Hoff and Elaine and when the latter was married she remained with Mrs. Hoff as her devoted helper, assuming large domestic responsibilities, so leaving Mrs. Hoff free for wider service.

The years for Mr. and Mrs. Hoff roll swiftly by, full of useful activity and governed by a happy routine. The last of October each year they go to Le Bréau for the shooting season and for easy access to Paris as the winter duties begin. Mr. Hoff frequently goes to his office in the city and on these days the servants understand that all lights must be lit at dusk and the window-shades left up until after his return. This cheery welcome for her husband after his long day in town is one of those little touches of thoughtfulness with which Mrs. Hoff surrounds every member of the family.

About the first of December, they move into Paris either for the winter or to prepare for the trip to America. The dreaded 'Christmas rush' does not exist in the household, for by the time they leave Château du Bréau their preparations are practically complete. Few families have as much to do for Christmas as this one; but careful planning and a genuine love of doing for others make every step a joy. The extra work is allowed to be a burden on no one. One year, when her secretary had more work than usual to do, Mrs. Hoff decided to address the envelopes for the Christmas cards herself. There was a staggering number of them and the address-books from which she worked covered a large table. But looking up one day from her labors, Mrs. Hoff said, 'I like to do this because I can think of each friend as I direct the envelope.'

The return to Paris from America is always made in April, in time to celebrate their wedding anniversary and Alix Labouchere's birthday. Then, as soon as the sunny days of spring appear, a few weeks are spent at Château du Bréau with open wood fires, luncheon parties, and a renewal of friendships. Here, too, the grandchildren spend their weekly holiday.

At this time of the year one may not walk in the forest, for the game is breeding and must not be disturbed. Mr.

Hoff, who has learned to be almost as quiet as the *garde-chasse* himself, sometimes takes a careful stroll in his least conspicuous costume, but no one with quick motions, bright colors, or above all wearing anything white, is allowed inside the forest gates.

With their arrival at Peyrieu in June, the best part of the year begins. The château has been made ready for them to the last detail. Even the secretary has gone ahead to arrange the many desks throughout the château that may be put into use. A lack anywhere would be a serious oversight, but so well trained are those that work with Mrs. Hoff that an error of the smallest sort is rare. It is this perfection of detail which she demands from her associates that has brought about the marvelous efficiency and freedom of her daily life.

Not long after Mr. and Mrs. Hoff are installed at the château, the members of the Labouchere family arrive. By July 4th — or July 14th — each of which is celebrated — the family is usually assembled. The American flag and the tricolor of France fly together from a window in the *Salle des Gardes* which overlooks the Rhone Valley. In the evening on both days the servants are mustered to a vantage-point to watch the display of fireworks on the terrace.

The daily routine at Peyrieu is closely observed, for it is only a well-planned schedule that makes the day long enough for receiving friends and relaxing with the children, in addition to the necessary duties of the *châtelaine*.

Every morning before breakfast the family gathers in Mrs. Hoff's room for morning prayers. Even the dog is there, and it often requires young Robert's attention to preserve Tarsau's reverence.

By the time breakfast is over, the mail arrives from the village and some time is spent in going through it, as Mrs. Hoff opens personally every letter addressed to her. At

nine o'clock Mr. Hoff confers with the manager of the estates while Mrs. Hoff joins her secretary in her *bureau* and dictates steadily for an hour or two. Every letter must be answered the day it comes, to avoid an unwieldy accumulation, and nothing except a grandchild is allowed to interfere with this duty.

One of her secretaries has said: 'I have never known any business man to dispatch so much material in so short a time. Everything is ready when the secretary comes in. Her thoughts flow in a steady stream.'

Part of Mrs. Hoff's secret is that she is stimulated by reading her mail. The written words bring her friends before her, and she is able to answer them in a chatty, informal manner that is almost as if they were with her. In business matters she owes her decisiveness to the early training of her father. She learned that, if a thing is to be done, it should be done at once. In making a plan, every detail should be cared for, and if an emergency arises, it should be met promptly and conclusively.

Her little basket of letters goes with her wherever she goes. So much a part of her home life is this little basket that Monsieur Bernard Boutet de Monvel painted her with it in his portrait for Detroit. Again she appeared with her basket on the cover of the candy-boxes that were given as souvenirs at a Rest Home reunion.

'With Madame Hoff one should never be astonished,' wrote one of the girls afterward, 'there is so much of goodness in her little basket.'

At eleven o'clock the family make it a point to gather at the swimming-pool. Twelve-thirty finds them together at luncheon. Almost every day there are guests for this meal, for whom the chef delights to practice his art. Coffee is served out-of-doors in the *Cour d'Honneur*, and then everyone scatters to his own pursuits until tea at four-thirty. For this, too, there are expected or unexpected guests.



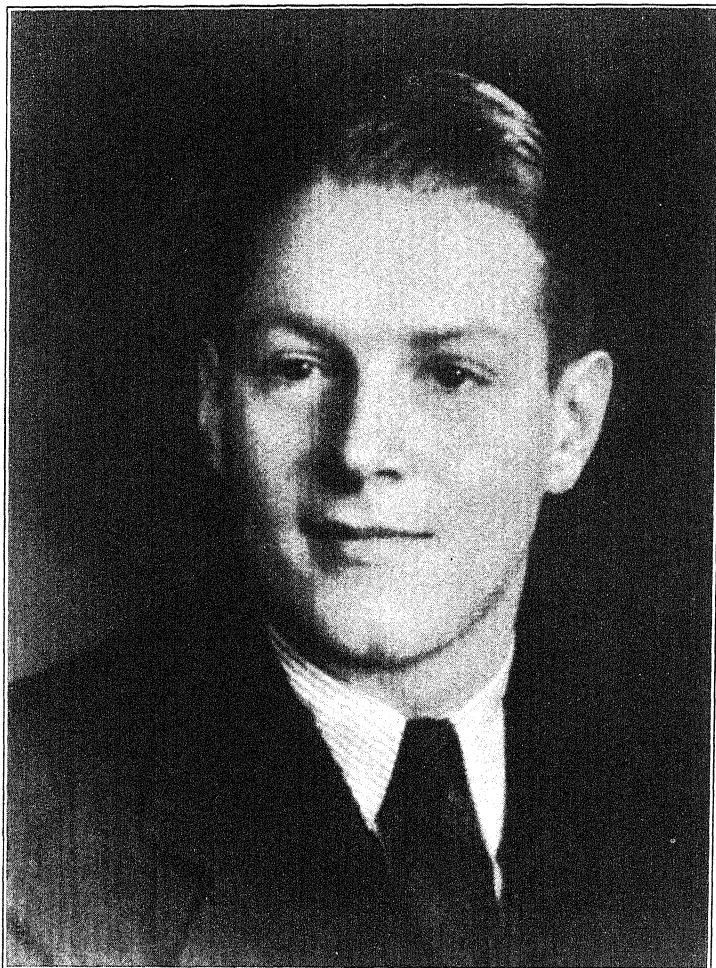
MADAME LABOUCHERE
From portrait by Corcos (Italian artist)



ALBERT EVERARD LABOUCHERE
Mrs. Hoff's son-in-law



ERNEST ALBERT LABOUCHERE



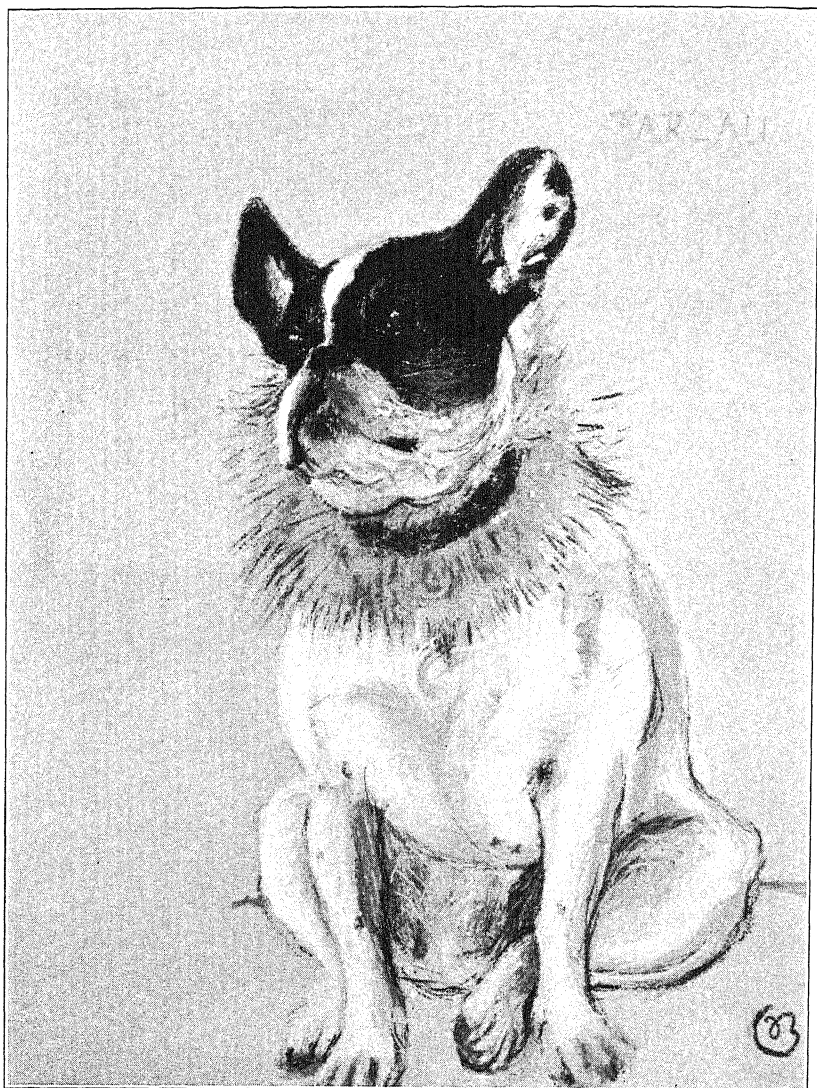
CHARLES DAVID LABOUCHERE



ALIX GRACE LABOUCHERE



ROBERT EUGENE LABOUCHERE



TARZAU
The pet dog of Grace Whitney Hoff

Directly afterward Mrs. Hoff receives her letters to be signed, and often she remains quietly in the *Cour d'Honneur* under the trees, resting or more often planning for greater service.

On clear evenings a powerful telescope is placed on the terrace and, looking through it, the children learn about stars and planets. Sometimes Château de Peyrieu offers a ball to the friends of the grandchildren, guests coming from far and near.

For days before this ball, the chef and his three assistants are busy preparing monumental pieces for the table. The chef himself is an artist *par excellence* and graduates from his kitchen are found in some of the royal *cuisines* of Europe. The floral decorations are also exquisite, done by the *maitre d'hôtel* and the Italian valets who are skilled in the art.

Perhaps the busiest of the four children is Robert. He has to help the gardeners and tend his own little plot where he plants radish seeds one day and finds full-grown radishes the next morning. How well does grandfather understand that little gardeners get tired of watching for seeds to sprout!

Mr. Hoff and Mr. Labouchere are the best of comrades. The former, walking leisurely through the estate, inspecting his model farm, or supervising some reconstruction in the village, is a charming country gentleman. Many times in his walks he visits a certain shady slope in the forest where his favorite bull dog, a pet of many years, is buried. This was one of Mr. Hoff's dearest possessions, and one which he has never tried to replace. By all the family his memory is guarded as that of a hero, for they believe that Romulus once saved Mr. Hoff's life. After a motor accident in Paris, Mr. Hoff was brought home unconscious and all efforts made to rouse him were useless. The doctor finally asked if he had a pet. When Romulus was brought

in and placed upon the bed, he began to lick his master's hand. Those who were watching saw the sick man's eyes flutter, and he said distinctly, 'Mulus!' From that time consciousness returned.

No story of Mrs. Hoff's life at home would be complete without a word concerning her collections. So many and so complete are these that few homes could hold them without being transformed into museums. Under her care they have been arranged so that they seem no more than beautiful furnishings.

Dealers in Paris know her as an expert buyer in almost every line, but the collections she has made express more than an acquisitive instinct. They reveal a genuine love of things that have stood the test of time and that have been enriched by association — 'Old books to read, old friends to love,' as the poet has said, and old things to live with.

Aside from her collection of books at Peyrieu, other treasures comprise old carved chests, tooled-leather boxes, such as the Marie Antoinette chest where her decorations are kept, the leather-tooled box of Marie de Medicis, a triptych of Henry IV, besides much wrought iron and carved stone used at the château and at the Rest Homes. The iron gates both at Peyrieu and Le Bréau are relics of another day.

Her porcelain collection, mostly in Paris, includes the early soft paste of France, Italy, and England. There are cases of Sèvres, of Dresden, *porcelaine de Paris*, Saxe, and Delft. This Delft ware is arranged in an interesting and almost intimate group in the upper halls of the Paris apartment, in combination with Dutch inlaid furniture and old woodwork.

The old jewel collection is remarkable for its array of watches including one of rock crystal from the Renaissance period, and some large, blue enamel ones charac-

teristic of Louis XVI, set with diamonds and surrounded with pearls. There are also many miscellaneous pieces of great value, a group of Indian jewelry and snuff-boxes.

At Château du Bréau there are some huge old candelabra, a cape and dress of the Virgin that came from a Spanish cathedral, an iridescent tiled fireplace of Moorish design, an old Italian cabinet of inlay work of mythological subjects. Here, as at Peyrieu and Paris, are many antique rugs, valuable tapestries, and period furniture.

The collection of laces is one of the choicest. It is kept in a leather box that once belonged to Louis the Eighteenth's Queen, the Comtesse de Provence. A Moorish-Spanish marriage chest holds many rare and beautiful silks — Venetian brocade, Genoese velvet, ecclesiastical embroideries, and French brocades from Lyons.

A friend who has visited Peyrieu was impressed by the fact that it succeeded in being a real home despite its treasures and its age. She wrote Mrs. Hoff: 'I have seen many mediæval châteaux, magnificent tombs of past grandeur and activity. Ghosts of knights and ladies peopled their empty corridors. One lived in a cemetery of history and greatness of the past. But today I saw a château alive, in resurrection.'

Sensitive to the beauties of her richly furnished châteaux, Mrs. Hoff is also attuned to the beauties of nature that surround her at Peyrieu.

'Mountains satisfy,' she has observed, 'for their calmness moderates our passion, but their greatness sometimes makes us lonely.... Trees come closer to our life, and our memories build nests in their branches.... To me trees are human.'

Once, in a letter to a friend, she described Peyrieu in the autumn, when the country was ablaze with color, but a little sadness crept in, as it will when summer is over.

'Peyrieu is a dream at this season, but my heart is lonely for the little brood flown to Paris.'

Though Mr. and Mrs. Hoff are rarely alone together, there is a unity between them which people and activities cannot disturb. As they have stood side by side on the terrace to welcome their guests and again to say Godspeed, so have they stood side by side through life. It is the prayer of those who know them that many years more may they stand thus together. Though one has passed the allotted span of life and the other is nearing it, a young friend expressed the thought of many when she said, 'I think people like you should live forever!'

CHAPTER IV

SYMPOSIUM

'IF ONE wishes to speak of Madame Hoff, one must begin with her faith, for faith in God, the inexhaustible source of all light, dominates her life.' These words were spoken by a girl from Le Moulin, and every act of Mrs. Hoff's life bears out their truth. The faith which she inherited from her mother has remained through all the changes and temptations of her life. Her broad humanitarianism has derived from her religion its vitalizing motive.

It is not surprising to know that in Detroit during the eighteen-nineties Grace Whitney gave many copies of 'Daily Strength for Daily Need' to her girls of the Young Women's Christian Association. In that generation people were not hesitant to admit the need of spiritual guidance. But that twenty and thirty years later she should be sending a similar book from Paris to her friends at home and abroad shows a remarkable constancy to things of the spirit. The second book, moreover, was the product of her own experience, for the author of 'A Message for Today' is Mrs. Hoff herself. In English and in French this book still brings its daily message to Mrs. Hoff's friends in many parts of the world.

The severest test of faith that the modern world has known was caused by the Great War. When the torn and shattered nations emerged from that conflict, the tide of idealism ebbed as fast as it had risen, leaving a wreckage of disillusion behind. Then many of the strongest began to doubt, while more became thoroughgoing materialists.

The upheaval centered in Paris, where the young suddenly became old and the old joined the young in a single attempt to forget. By what miracle did Mrs. Hoff remain

untouched? Was it that her life had too long been consecrated to God to be swept from that sure anchorage?

Dr. Samuel N. Watson, formerly of the American Episcopal Church in Paris, has said of Mrs. Hoff, 'She has the mystic's mind, the mystic's heart, the mystic's affirmative insistence on a reality of Beauty beneath every seeming unfairness, and the mystic's faith that the Unseen is more real than the seen.'

Because she is essentially a mystic, she could not become a materialist; and the fact that she is dominated by the spiritual conception of life in an age of materialism has given her peculiar power over others. Madame Chaminade was not the only one who turned to Mrs. Hoff for strength after the War, or who was touched by the abiding power of her faith.

'How utterly rare and wonderful amid the shiftings and disillusionings of life to know someone who never fails, who is as strong and steadfast as she is tender!' wrote a young American matron in Paris.

A *Mouliniste* has said: 'The peace which seems to reign in her is reflected on her face and at her approach one feels one's self enveloped in this atmosphere of serene tranquility. If it has been said of Bonaparte because of his heroism, "One becomes brave just by looking at him," one might also say of Madame Hoff, "One becomes good just by looking at her."'

'She creates an atmosphere in which hope is born,' wrote another; and a third has said, 'Each time that I have met her, I have had the impression of a wholesomeness in the world.'

An American soldier whom she befriended at Peyrieu, and whom she has tried to comfort during his post-war experiences, wrote, 'She seems like eternal sunshine brightening the path ahead, guiding upward above the din of today onward into the uncertainty of the future.'



MRS. HOFF

From a portrait by Bernard Boutet de Monvel. Original in Young Women's Christian Association, Detroit. Unveiled January 4, 1931



It is a matter of astonishment to many that Mrs. Hoff, with all her wealth, should not have succumbed to its temptations. An American college president, noting that she had everything that money could bring and that she was still unspoiled, added, 'I have observed for years that a severer test of character is to be found in prosperity than in adversity.'

Religious history tells us of those who have renounced their possessions to serve the Lord. But Mrs. Hoff believes that a woman does not have to deprive herself of her natural surroundings or place herself where she is acting a part, in order to serve. In the beautiful setting which her wealth makes possible, she has exerted more influence than she could ever have done in poverty, and has been a more eloquent example to others.

As Lady Fitz-Randolph once said to her, 'One has seen many beautiful places with much of the beauty this world supplies, and one has seen many spiritual lives lived in simple surroundings, but I have never seen the two combined and carried out in the beautiful and perfect way that you have.'

In 1927 an old and understanding friend wrote her from Detroit:

Do you know I noted a new tenderness and appreciation of the real spirit of your life sanctifying all its gorgeousness and pomp, as various admirers recounted the events of your visit in Detroit. It is a victory to triumph and rise above all the material comforts of your life so that people cannot but feel there is a deeper and truer realm in which you live and breathe and have your being.

The secret of Mrs. Hoff's spiritual power is daily communion with God. By morning prayer she sets the keynote of each day, and, as she goes about her busy round, the thought of God is never far away. No more fitting

expression of the ideals that have ruled her life can be found than in the words of her own prayer:

My Heavenly Father, unto Thee do I commit this day, keep it pure and holy in Thy sight! Cleanse my heart from all that would mar the beauty of Thy love, and may my love for Thee guide every thought, every spoken word, and every act, so that the world, while beholding my life, may see only the reflection of Thy abiding Presence.

To all who touch my life may I be kind and true, and when Heaven beckons me to the larger life, may the world be better because I was faithful to the end. Amen.

THE END

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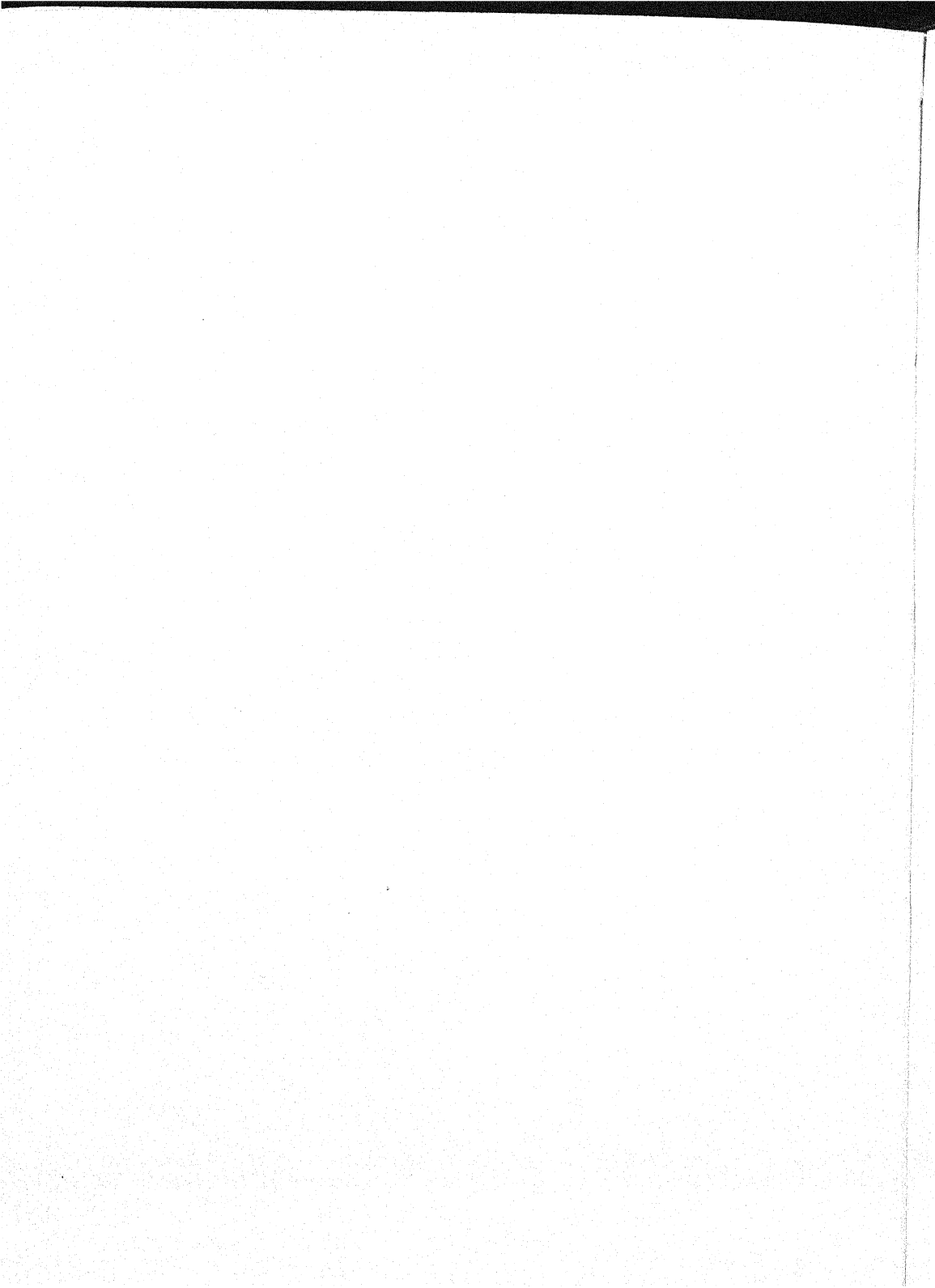
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